

# These Weeks in Biology

March 15th, 2008 - April 17th, 2008

## Accolades

- **Jessica Healy** and **Ashley Fenn** from **Dr. Florant's** Lab. took first place for best poster by an graduate and undergraduate student respectively at the Biology Department Research Symposium.
- **Ashley Fenn**, from **Dr. Greg Florant's** lab, was accepted into the NSF undergraduate REU program in Anchorage, AK for the summer. Only 6 students were chosen from the 240 applicants. Ashley will be spending part of the time at Toolik Research Station, above the arctic circle.
- The winners of the 2008 Department of Biology Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring are in! Graduate Student Teaching Award: **Shelley Bayard de Volo**; Faculty Early Career Teaching Award: **Cameron K. Ghalambor**; Undergraduate Teaching Award: **Donald L. Mykles**; Mentoring of Undergraduate Research Award: **Elizabeth M. Harp**; Graduate Education and Mentoring Award: **N. LeRoy Poff**. Congratulations to all of our awardees! The awards ceremony will be held in E112 A/Z on Tuesday, April 8th, at 3:40 PM before the departmental seminar.
- **Ann Gibbs**, a Biology Senior working with **Dr. Dhruba Naug** earned an Honors award in the Undergraduate Research Symposium for her poster "Infected bees are more hungry and less social: Behavioral alteration of a host by a pathogen."
- **Professor Daniel Bush** was elected Fellow of the American Society of Plant Biologists in 2008.

## Dissertation Defenses

- **Shelley Bayard de Volo**, from the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology and the Department of Biology, successfully defended her PhD dissertation titled "Genetic studies of Northern Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*): Genetic tagging and individual identification from feathers, and determining phylogeography, gene flow and population history for goshawks in North America". Congratulations to **Dr. Bayard** and to her major advisor, **Professor Mike Antolin**.
- **Jana Heisler**, from the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology and the Department of Biology, successfully defended her PhD dissertation titled "Sensitivity of grassland ecosystems across the Great Plains to present and future variability in precipitation". Congratulations to **Dr. Heisler** and to her major advisor, **Professor Alan Knapp**

## Thesis Defenses

- **Madeline Scheintaub**, from the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology and the Department of Biology Department successfully defended her Masters thesis entitled "The response of the shortgrass steppe to fire". Congratulations to Ms. Scheintaub and to her major advisor **Professor Alan Knapp**.

## Research Funding and Grants

- **Assistant Professor Debbie Garrity** has been awarded an REU supplement by the National Science Foundation to support two undergraduate students this summer.
- **Assistant Professor Joe von Fischer** was awarded a visiting scientist fellowship from the University of Melbourne. **Dr. von Fischer** will give two invited lectures and initiate a research project in Australia in November 2008.
- Graduate student **Sharon Poessel** of the Angeloni Lab was granted a Women in Natural Sciences Research Award to support her research on the behavior and conservation of black-footed ferrets.

## On the Road

- Prof. **Don Mykles** gave an invited talk for the "Signaling and control of skeletal muscle remodeling" Featured Topic Session at the Experimental Biology 2008 meeting in San Diego April 5-9.
- **Professor Mike Antolin** and **Graduate Fellow Dylan George** were in State College, PA on March 24-26 to participate in the RAPIDD (Research and Policy in Infectious Disease Dynamics) working group on emerging infectious disease threats, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center and the US Department of Homeland Security.
- **Professor Daniel Bush** visited the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to review their intercollegiate graduate program in plant biology.
- **Professor Greg Florant** serves on the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience Board which is a consortium of five Universities and Colleges in Atlanta and will be attending the board meeting in Atlanta, GA from April 17th to 19th.
- As part of the INBRE program in Alaska, **Dr. Greg Florant** will be doing field research with Drs. Loren Buck and Brian Barnes at Toolik field station from May 14th to May 31th.

## New Publications from Biology

- Assistant Professor **Joe von Fischer** is lead author on a new paper in *Global Change Biology* "Climate controls on C3 vs. C4 productivity in North American grasslands from carbon isotope composition of soil organic matter"
- Recently-graduated PhD **Angie Moline** and **Professor LeRoy Poff** have a paper in the upcoming issue of *Freshwater Biology*, entitled "Growth of an invertebrate shredder on native (*Populus*) and non-native (*Tamarix*, *Elaeagnus*) leaf litter" (doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2427.2008.01960.x).
- **Professor LeRoy Poff** is co-author on a paper in the March issue of *Ecology*, led by his former PhD student **Julian Olden** entitled "Trait synergisms and the rarity, extirpation, and extinction risk of desert fishes."
- **Mueller, R. L.**, T. R. Gregory, S. M. Gregory, A. Hsieh, and J. L. Boore. 2008. Genome size, cell size, and the evolution of enucleated erythrocytes in attenuate salamanders. *Zoology*, 111(3): 218-230.
- Special Assistant Professor **Gul Shad Ali**, former Postdoctoral Research Associates **K.V.S.K. Prasad**, **Mamatha Hanumappa** and Professor **A.S.N. Reddy** published a paper (**Title: Analyses of in vivo interaction and mobility of two spliceosomal proteins using FRAP and BiFC**) in *PLoS ONE*.
- Special Assistant Professor **Gul Shad Ali**, Former Postdoctoral Research Associate **Saiprasad Palusa**, Professor **A.S.N. Reddy** and collaborators from Germany published a paper (**Title: Alternative splicing at NAGNAG acceptors in Arabidopsis thaliana SR and SR-related protein-coding genes**) in *BMC Genomics*

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