

# MPB GSA NEWSLETTER

Winter 2013

The purpose of this newsletter is to serve as a resource for MPB students to get to know the department better.

## Molecular Physiology & Biophysics Graduate Student Association

### Inaugural MPB Field Day

By Amanda Meyer

The first MPB Field Day held on Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> drew faculty, post-docs, and students out of their labs and onto the recreation field to compete in a series of events for highly coveted departmental bragging rights. Hopes ran high as teams decided who amongst their membership would compete in each of the four events: the Personal Protective Equipment Race, the Water Glove Toss, the Coffee Cup Race, and Biohazard Sack Race. The dark blue team showed that they were the speedsters of the mouse facility, donning their gear and running across the recreation field in the fastest time to win the Personal Protective Equipment Race. However, they were soon shown up by the versatile light blue team, who tossed, ran, carried, and hopped their way to victory in the Water Glove Toss, Coffee Cup Race, AND Biohazard Sack Race.

Although the light blue team took home the bragging rights, everyone left with a smile. Many Field Day participants took the opportunity to model their new MPB shirts designed by third year student and Hasty lab member Reid Bolus. Others enjoyed the opportunity to meet some of the other people in the department. All appreciated the chance to laugh at their colleagues and at themselves as they tried their hand at the fun, silly lab-themed field events. <>>



### Thank you, Angie Pernell!

This fall the MPB department had to say goodbye to a long time member of the front office, Angie Pernell. The GSA held a lunch in appreciation for all that she did while in our department. Angie was a great resource for students; she helped with scheduling, registration, seminars and parties in addition to the behind the scenes work that helped our department run as smoothly as it always has. Angie will be missed but we wish her the best of luck with her next adventure in the BRET office. <>>



## Annual MPB Relay Race

By Kayla Boortz

After a year of holding the crown for fastest MPB lab, the Piston Lab was challenged for their title in the annual department 4x6 relay race on October 11<sup>th</sup>. With each team being composed of six people: two girls, a PI and four lab members, the stage was set for a battle amongst peers. As Roger Cone announced the start of the race, the PI's were off. After 300 meters, Richard O'Brien pulled ahead and was once again the fastest PI. The next four laps were close with the Jacobson, Nakagawa, Powers, Weil and Young labs all competing, but it came down to the sixth and final lap. With the O'Brien lab in the lead by a mere 100 meters, the Piston lab was able to catch up and finish the race on top. Looks as though the Piston Lab will keep their title, the teapot, and bragging rights for another year. <>



## A Super MPB Halloween

By Erica J Pruett

The seventh floor atrium was swarming with a festive crowd on Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at the annual GSA sponsored MPB Halloween Party. Several labs and MPB members arrived in ghoulish and clever garb to participate in the costume contest. In the most closely contested race, attendees vied the merits of the O'Brien Lab's "Avengers" ensemble versus the Cone Lab's creative Nintendo Super Smash Brothers characters while drinking pints of Yazoo and eating enough trick or treat candy to challenge their insulin sensitivity. The votes were counted and O'Brien's team of superhumans took home the prize, while a ninja from the Gannon lab carried off the individual costume prize. It's rumored that the identity of the ninja is in fact Maria Golson. Honorable mention went to Roger Cone as a furry and ferocious suited Donkey Kong and baby Jude Panaro as the cutest Toadstool anyone had ever seen. We wonder what Chairman Cone will conceive next year to rival these past two Halloween performances. The presence of multiple costumes macgyvered with lab supplies prompted discussion for the introduction of a category for costumes entirely composed of lab material. Start stowing away those tip boxes MPB! <>







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# Faculty Spotlight: Kate Ellacott, Ph.D.

By Bethany Carboneau

## Kate Ellacott

The Ellacott lab studies how obesity affects the central nervous system.

Kate has been a member of the MPB faculty since 2009. She will be relocating her lab to her home country of the U.K. in early 2014. We will all greatly miss her presence in MPB!



## Tell us about your upcoming move back to Britain.

I am taking a position as a Senior Lecturer (roughly equivalent to Associate Professor) at the University of Exeter Medical School. Exeter is a small city in the Southwest of England near where my family is originally from. Exeter is about 35 miles from Plymouth which is where the Mayflower sailed from bringing the Pilgrim Fathers to the United States.

## What are you looking forward to the most?

I have been living in the US for 11 years so I am looking forward to being closer to my family and being able to see them more frequently. I am also looking forward to living near the ocean again. After growing up on an island living in a land-locked place like Tennessee is hard.

## What will you miss about Nashville?

There are a lot of things that I will miss about Nashville. At Vanderbilt I will miss all my colleagues who have been so collegial and supportive, and all the amazing facilities and resources. Outside of Vanderbilt I will miss lots of small things; fireflies, predictable weather, frequent sunshine, the chirping of cicadas in

the summer, cheap gas.....I won't miss the tornadoes though.

## What was one of your favorite moments from your time at Vanderbilt?

At work I have really enjoyed working with my students and post-doc. We have all grown and learnt a lot together. Outside of work I would have to say the birth of my son Max, who has completely changed my life.

## What is your most memorable moment in science?

That is a hard one...I don't have any one single major moment. The main moments that have shaped my career to date are probably: 1) being awarded my first grant which funded my post-doctoral work with Roger Cone; 2) getting the job at Vanderbilt; 3) when my first graduate student, Laura Buckman, joined my lab; and 4) having my first senior author paper published.

## What advice would you give to new graduate students and/or post-docs?

I try to live by the following and it is what I tell my students/post-docs:

1. In science things always take longer than you think they should – multiply how long you think something should take by three and that is probably how long it will really take.
2. Sometimes experiments don't work and you will never know why. Don't obsess about it. Learn from it, adapt and try again.
3. Have one day a week which is science free (no experiments, no email, no writing, no reading papers). You need to rest your mind to think clearly.
4. It is ok to have a life outside of science. In fact, it is important. When you are at work focus on your work and get it done so you can relax at home.
5. Try to take something positive from every situation. As scientists we have so many more negative results than positive ones most of the time - you will go crazy if you focus on the negative.
6. Persevere! «»

# New Year, New MPB GSA Officers

The students of MPB have elected the GSA board for 2014. The GSA would like to thank the prior officers for their contributions. We are looking forward to a great year of organizing events and outreach opportunities for the MPB department faculty, post docs, and students. One of our goals is to continue to increase student involvement and camaraderie this year. Please contact any of the officers with recommendations, critiques or ideas. «»

**President:** Kayla Boortz

**Vice-President:** Reid Bolus

**Treasurer:** Ashley Williams

**Secretary:** Kristen Syring

**Webmaster:** Leslie Roteta

**Seminar Chair:** Peter Kropp

**Communications Chair:** Bethany Carboneau

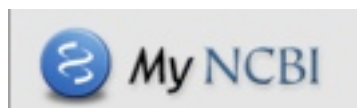
## TOOLS YOU CAN USE!



**Vanderbilt Toastmasters** is a group of mostly Graduate level students and young professionals who get together to practice public speaking and leadership. It's great training for anyone who wants to improve their public speaking or want to get over their fear of talking in front of a crowd.



**Papers** (for Mac) is a great way to organize your research articles. It's like iTunes for PDFs!



**My NCBI** saves searches and results from multiple NCBI databases, and features an option to automatically update and e-mail search results from your saved searches. My NCBI users can save their citations (journal articles, books, meetings, patents and presentations) in My Bibliography. If you haven't already, sign up for your own account.

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We want to hear from you!

MPB students know how to get things done! Let us know of recent grants, awards and publications so we can feature it in the newsletter. Also, If you would like to contribute to the newsletter just let us know. You can submit articles to [MPBGSA@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:MPBGSA@vanderbilt.edu). It's a great way to improve your writing skills and would look great on your CV. Comments and suggestions are encouraged as well.



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