

THE HUB

March 2005

Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research

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Earth Week 2005 “Think Globally, Act Locally”

On Tuesday, April 19th, from 9:00am-2:00pm, BTI Staff will have the opportunity to help the local environment by participating in one of two activities - on BTI time!

Volunteers will meet at BTI and can choose to either pull up invasive garlic-mustard at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, or clean up the banks of Fall Creek here on campus.

Besides the feeling of personal satisfaction, you'll get a free lunch and a classy water bottle!

For more information or to sign up, contact Shawna Williams.

From the Hot Seat *by David Stern*

BTI As A Citizen

On July 22, 1997, I rolled a liner stone into place on a rock causeway we were building in the Trinity Alps mountains of California. Unfortunately, my gloved hand was in the way of the heavy stone's final resting place, and the top segment of the third finger on my left hand split open like a ripe watermelon dropped from a ladder. As the blood began to drip from my glove, I put my hand in the nearby cold stream and reflected on my situation. I was the cook for a Sierra Club Service Trip¹, and the trip members were counting on me for nine more meals. On the other hand, I was 5 miles from the nearest dirt road with not a doctor in sight.

The problem was solved with a bit of painkiller – OK, more than a bit – and some amount of teeth-clenching. But what made it easy to stay instead of hike out was the fact that I was in a beautiful wilderness. When we are close to the Earth in its most wild and untouched form, we are renewed and connected to our spiritual sides, which we often find have been suppressed. Modern molecular biology and biochemistry, especially using model plant systems, doesn't do much to connect us to the world of the wild. Still, BTI can have a role both in preserving and appreciating the local environment, and in bettering the planet.

Earth Day was founded in the U.S. in 1970, championed by Senator Gaylord Nelson.² While some claim the environmental movement is dead or dying³, let's hope that's not true. It is in this spirit that BTI is participating in Earth Week this year. As you will see from the flyers posted in the hallways, we are going to take part in two cleanups, and I hope you will find an hour or more to contribute to the effort. You will feel better – I guarantee it – and the world around us will be a little less polluted. BTI is also sponsoring the Finger Lakes Land Trust⁴ “Talks and Treks” in the upcoming season. FLLT, of course, was founded by our own Carl Leopold. This will also facilitate the appreciation of the Earth by local citizens.

With so much to worry about in life, sometimes it seems impossible to get back to the basics of being a living, breathing organism. Whether you participate in the above, or something else, I recommend that you find a way to plug into the planet. You'll be glad you did.

¹ <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/service.asp>

² <http://earthday.wilderness.org/history/>

³ <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2005/01/13/doe-reprint/>

⁴ <http://www.fllt.org/>

Clearing The Record

In the 2nd word of the 4th sentence of the 3rd paragraph on the 1st page of last month's issue of *The Hub*, a capital “P” was mysteriously abducted. Thereby making David Stern the “resident” instead of the “President”.

If you have any information as to the whereabouts of the missing “P”, please call the 24-hour emergency *Hub Hotline* at 800-JUS-KIDN.

BTI Post-Graduate Society News

The start of 2005 saw a changeover in the PGS Committee, with new positions created as well as the appearance of some new faces. We would like to extend an on-going invitation to anyone who wants to join the committee. You can also contact a committee member if you wish to help out with any event they are coordinating.

We are planning an exciting program for 2005, so please support the PGS by continuing to participate in our events. We started the year with a BTI Fest combined with a meeting to recruit new committee members and to share our plans for the year ahead. February saw the first of our lunchtime Professional Development Series (PDS) seminars on intellectual property by Chris Michaels. Thanks to Paul Debbie for arranging Chris's visit, for which the feedback was all very positive. Our next PDS talk will be on March 28th titled "First impressions and one step beyond" on CV preparation and academic job application by Maria Harrison. Who better to discuss this topic than the recent chair of a BTI faculty search committee? If you were unable to attend this seminar but are interested in it, please let me know and I will schedule another one.

We recently had a BTI Fest Seminar and Chalk Talk by ASPB Director Crispin Taylor that was well-attended and showed some insight into a non-academic science career path. This year's BTI Fests will be organized by various floors, so look out for your chance to get involved. This is your opportunity to suggest to your floor's committee members Cornell faculty that you would like to see speak about their research. For the next BTI Fest in April, the second floor is planning to host Dr. Jocelyn Rose from the Department of Plant Biology.

The PGS Committee is in the process of organizing the 2005 BTI Annual Scientific Retreat. Thanks to everyone who filled out the retreat survey and suggested possible speakers. We have a new and improved venue this year, so mark your calendars for Friday August 19th.

2005 PGS Committee

Faculty Advisor—Peter Moffett

Chair—Melanie Sacco

Vice-Chair—Tom Bollenbach

Secretary—Corina Vlot

Treasurer—Jeff Anderson

Retreat Coordinator—Sarah Covshoff

Distinguished Lecturer Coordinator—Kerry Pedley

2nd Floor Member—Dhiren Kumar

4th Floor Member—Quan Zhang

Kudos! Kudos! Kudos! Kudos!

Kudos to **Mark D'Ascenzo** for all his help with the software and computer problems in CGEP. You went far above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks.

- Paul Debbie

I want to give praise and kudos to **Valleri** and **Lucy** for all their efforts, time and hard work put in to get my VISA upgraded. Thank you ever so much!

- Sophia Ekengren

Kudos to **Kim, Judy**, and **George** for always doing such a fantastic job. We're all constantly tracking in mud, slush, salt, and grime but they still manage to make BTI shine.

- Joan Curtiss

Comings & Goings

Welcome to the newest member of the BTI Greenhouse Staff, **Liza White**.

Fond farewell to...

Fasong Zhou, the newest Staff Scientist at CERES Inc., a plant biotech company in California.

Christine Fleet, who is moving to Boston with her husband.

David Burke, who accepted a position at SUNY-ESF in Syracuse.

Steve Littlejohn, who will be staying home with his new daughter for a few months, then moving to Lynchburg, VA to finish his BS degree in environmental science. Steve's goal is to become a middle school science teacher.

Some of our students and part-timers have moved on as well. Good luck to...

Hannah Kohut, Malika Latmore, Ryan Gutierrez, Casey Clausen, and Geetanjalee Hamilton.

And finally, I must mention our most recent retirees, **Bob Kohut** and **Kathy Kramer**. Heck, let's throw **Barbara Warland** in there too. How's life outside the big house? Wish you were here!

March Service Anniversaries

Valleri Longcoy	11 yrs
Sherry Roof	6 yrs
Helene Javot	2 yrs
Kate Krupnik	1 yr
Aditi Behere	1 yr

Apologies to **Ialon Irijimovich** for overlooking his 1-year anniversary in February!!

Oh, Baby!

Congratulations to BTI's newest parents, **Judy Kolkman** and husband, **Chris Owens!** Baby boy **Maxwell** arrived bright and early March 1st and was a WHOPPING 10 lbs., 13 oz.! OH, BABY!!! (Or should I say, "OW, BABY!")

StepUp Underway!

Have you recently noticed mysterious clicking noises coming from co-workers as they pass you in the hall? That's the sound that a group of BTI'ers will be making for the next few weeks as they compete in the StepUp Healthy Competition!

36 people (9 teams) stepped up and are challenging themselves and each other to eat healthier and exercise more for an eight-week period. Each day, players are trying to meet the goals of eating 5 servings of fruits and veggies, registering 10,000 steps on their pedometers (the source of the mysterious clicking) and drink 64oz. of water.

Competitors log their daily totals on a website designed by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and then can see where they rank against other teams and players in the competition.

Good luck to all of you!

Rewards & Recognition

Congratulations to...

Maria Harrison for her stellar work on the Scientist Search Committee!

Brian Gollands, Nicole Markelz, Joan Curtiss and **Shawna Williams** for developing the new website - it looks great!

Kim Huizinga and **Kay Blake** for bringing down our Accounts Receivable to \$0 - nice job ladies!

Reminder To BTI Foreign Staff...

If you are planning on traveling outside the U.S., please make sure you have obtained all the necessary signatures and documents to GET BACK IN!!

Lucy and Valleri are both authorized to sign visa/immigration documents so make sure you check with them, *several days* if possible, before you leave. (If you are traveling on Saturday, please don't wait until 4:00 on Friday afternoon to come see us!)

Upcoming Cornell Workshops

Register for the following courses at: <http://register.cit.cornell.edu:8000>. Questions can be directed to Organizational Development Services at 254-6400.

New Supervisor Orientation Certificate Program

(Class 2607) March 31, April 7, 14, 21, 28, and May 5; 9:00am-4:00pm; 20 Thornwood Drive, Suite 101; primary Staff Skill for Success: Self Development; Instructors: Representatives from the Office of Human Resources and subject matter experts from other university departments; \$250

Emotional Factors in Chronic Pain

(Class 2643); March 29; 2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.; 163 Day Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Self Development; Instructor: Cora Ellen Luke, MA, NCC, RPT, clinician and workplace consultant, Employee Assistance Program; no charge

Professional Development Open House

(Class 2737); April 4; 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.; 163 Day Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Self Development; Instructor: JoAnn Shepherd, senior human resource consultant and manager, professional development, ODS; no charge

Dealing With Difficult People

(Class 2649); April 5; 1:00pm-4:00 pm; 163 Day Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Teamwork; Instructor: Linda Starr, MSW, CSW, Employee Assistance Program; \$30

Parenting Skills: Surviving The Teen Years (Ages 14-17)

(Class 2611) April 6; 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.; 170 Roberts Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Self Development; no charge

Supervisory Round Table - Raising Morale in the Workplace

(Class 2725); April 11; 12:00pm-1:15pm; 163 Day Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Communication; Instructors: Linda Gasser, assistant director/senior OD consultant; Jim Sheridan, senior trainer; no charge

Parenting Skills: Building Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families

(Class 2612) April 13; 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.; 170 Roberts Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Self Development; no charge

Listening with Understanding

(Class 2679); April 14; 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.; 163 Day Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Communication; Instructor: Jim Sheridan, senior trainer, ODS; \$30

Depression: A Whole Body Experience

(Class 2650); April 21; 2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.; 163 Day Hall; primary Staff Skill for Success: Self Development; Instructor: Jim Morris, MSW, CSW, clinician and workplace consultant, Employee Assistance Program; no charge

Karl Maramorosch

Turns 90! *By Bob Granados*

On January 18, 2005, the Department of Entomology at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ held a gala celebration on the occasion of the 90th birthday of **Dr.**



Karl Maramorosch. Karl was a Senior Scientist and Program Director at Boyce Thompson Institute during 1961 to 1974. He is currently a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Entomology at Rutgers where he works full days writing, editing books, lecturing at meetings around the world and writing his memoirs.

Karl was born on January 16, 1915 in Vienna, Austria and his family subsequently moved to Poland. He graduated from the Agricultural University in Poland in 1938 and went to work at his father's estate in south-eastern Poland. In 1939 he fled Poland when it was invaded by Germany and he was forced to spend years in refugee camps in Rumania. After World War II he finally succeeded in coming to the United States with his wife Irene in 1947. He obtained his PhD from Columbia in 1949 and then joined the laboratory of the Dr. Louis Kunkel at the Rockefeller Institute in New York City. By coincidence, Dr. L. Kunkel was the first senior scientist hired by the Boyce Thompson Institute, where he worked from 1923 until 1932. In 1961 Karl left the Rockefeller Institute and joined the BTI. His research contributions in insect virology and invertebrate tissue culture achieved worldwide acclaim and brought many scientists from around the world to work at the Institute.

The birthday celebration began with a departmental seminar given by Bob Granados entitled, "Invertebrate Cell Culture: Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered No More". During his talk Bob recounted the early history of insect cell culture and the many pioneering contributions Karl Maramorosch and his research team made during his tenure at BTI and at Rutgers University. It is widely acknowledged by his peers that Karl was one of the most influential scientists who made numerous seminal contributions to insect virology and insect cell culture. He has been the recipient of many national and international awards including the prestigious Wolf Prize in Agriculture in 1980.

The evening dinner was held at the Rutgers Faculty Club and included many guests and friends from the Rutgers community and elsewhere. After dinner there were many stories from the attendees recounting Karl's personal and professional life and especially how he guided the careers of many students, postdoctoral fellows, and staff. Bob felt very honored to have been an invited guest and speaker since Karl had hired Bob and his wife Johanna to work in his lab at BTI in 1964 and 1963, respectively. We all agreed to repeat this celebration on his 95th birthday.

Letter From Retirement

By Kathy Kramer

Greetings from this country called Retirement! It's beautiful here. In the morning, I awake to the light instead of the clamor of an alarm clock. Then, from my front window where I sit with a cup of tea, I can see the whole vista of snow-covered valley and the hills beyond laid out before me. The mail-order flower catalogs are beginning to arrive and although I'm not much of a gardener these days, these catalogs with their colorful (and perfect) flower pictures give me a glimpse of spring. Life is good!

The vista of time is also before me. What a luxury it is to be able to choose when I do things, whether chores like laundry or scrubbing the floor or fun things like writing poetry or trying my hand at directing a couple of short plays. Or having a leisurely lunch with a friend, like dear Barbara Warland, who also lives in the country called Retirement. In the spring, several other retirees and former members of "Bookies," the book discussion group at BTI, plan to begin meeting regularly as "Bookies Emeriti."

Jack and I are able to spend more time with family now. We just returned from a visit with my parents in Pennsylvania and will travel soon to Massachusetts to see two of our sons and their families, including granddaughters, Wendy and Isabel.

You know, before I retired, I thought I'd be plunging into new things with both feet. I'm quite surprised to find that I don't feel the urge to plunge, but rather, to wade. To go slowly, notice the details, savor the feelings, give thanks for each day. I'm learning that one's interior "country" is quite spacious with a vista all its own.

Finally, my thanks to all of you with whom I've worked at BTI. I miss you. It's a pleasure to think of you and of the wonderful celebration which was such a touching and heart-warming bon voyage party as I set off to this country called Retirement. Blessings on you all.

AAAS Elects Two At BTI

Congratulations to **Greg Martin** and **David Stern**, who were recently elected as AAAS Fellows. AAAS, which stands for **American Association for the Advancement of Science**, is the world's largest general scientific society, and publisher of the journal, **Science**.

Newly elected Fellows are presented with the "Fellowship Rosette" at the annual Fellows Forum. The presentation of the rosette honors AAAS members whose efforts on behalf of the advancement of science or its applications in service to society have distinguished them among their peers and colleagues.

AAAS was founded in 1848, and serves some 262 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals. **Science** has the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world, with an estimated total readership of 1 million. The non-profit AAAS (www.aaas.org) is open to all and fulfills its mission to "advance science and serve society" through initiatives in science policy, international programs, science education and more.

Random Memories: *Hip-Hop*

I had some space to fill in this issue so I decided to browse through old issues of the *sNews*, (*The Hub's* predecessor) in search of something interesting. As luck would have it, I came across one of my favorite articles so I've decided to "run it again". The following creative writing piece was submitted by **Len Weinstein** and first appeared in the March 1994 *sNews*. - *Valleri*

It was 5:45am when Sylvia and I dragged into the lobby of the Hospital. I was scheduled to arrive at 6:00am but being a classic Type A personality, we arrived early. Soon, people began hobbling in, all looking apprehensive and knowing that before the morning was over, major changes in their architecture would be taking place. A nurse, who strongly resembled the famous Curtis print of *Sitting Bull*, came into the reception area, looked around and shouted, "How!! Hips over here, knees over there, and shoulders in the far corner! Look alive! You with that stupid looking hat, let's go!" I looked around, but there was no one near me. I had worn my Greek fisherman's hat because I never knew when I might escape by sea. I decided then that in the future I would wear my tam o'shanter for important occasions.

"O.K., hips on the elevators." A crowd of people with canes, crutches, walkers, and other more complex appliances moved to the elevators. I was the only one walking without any help, without even a limp, although it nearly killed me. Many thoughts raced through my mind. "What am I doing here with all these handicapped people who obviously need surgery? This looks like a big mistake. Maybe I should opt out. Suppose I refuse to get on the elevator. After all, this is called 'elective surgery'."

My fantasy was interrupted when Sylvia shoved me on the elevator and followed me in. We got off at the 5th floor and were led into a room with 8 beds, each with individual curtains, so that each bed was screened from the others. In donning the hospital gown, I was disappointed to discover that my gown did not have a label, "Designed by Donna Karan for the Hospital for Special Surgery", but it did say "Property of Riker's Island".

A head poked through the curtain. "I'm Nurse Femur and I'm going to give you a rundown on your day. But, first sign these papers." "We assume no responsibility for anything...All the risks are yours, including food poisoning..."

With your signature, you have agreed to pay an amount of \$879 per month for a five-year open-ended lease on a fully-loaded Jaguar for the exclusive use of your surgeon, Dr. Osso Buco...In the event that one leg ends up shorter than the other, we will reimburse to you, or your estate, \$100 per inch." And so forth. I wanted to ask questions, but I was so rattled that I couldn't even put two meaningful thoughts together on "My Day on the Farm", I signed the documents.

Nurse Femur came in again and yelled, "O.K., roll the wagons. Onward Ho!!" A hook on each bed was connected to an endless chain, and off we went. I felt like I was on a Model T line, and in some ways I was. I waved feebly to Sylvia as I played the Serbian national anthem on my comb.

I was No. 6 in this cog-driven caravan, heading for the operating room. As we rolled along slowly, the anesthesiologist, Dr. Sopor, hooked up an I.V. and said, "I'm going to inject a little relaxant into your I.V. line to reduce your apprehension in the operating room." I never saw the operating room. But later, through the mists, I apparently awakened and heard saws, drills, and what sounded like someone shoeing horses....gazaga-clang, gazaga-clang, gazaga-clang!! "What am I doing in a farrier's shop?" I cried. "Shut him up," someone said and almost immediately I was back in the land of swirling mists.

The next time I awoke, I was back on the wagon train, moving slowly, people reaching in, jabbing me with needles and connecting things. *continued on pg. 6*

Management UpD8!!

Here are some of the activities management has worked on in February and early March:

- Thank you to all supervisors who completed their evaluations in a timely fashion. 99% of evaluations were complete by the end of February. Lucy is going to spend some time tweaking the forms for next year to make them more user friendly.
- All new employees will receive the Lab Notebook Policy as part of their orientation. The policy will be included in the "new hire" information handed out by Human Resources.
- Earth Day Volunteers – BTI volunteers will spend a half-day participating in cleanups in and around Ithaca (see pg. 1 for more details).
- Auditorium renovations will take place in late May.
- Larry Russell and Brian Bell are working on getting greenhouse controls installed. There should be considerable energy savings as a result of this installation.
- The ceiling in the library office is being replaced and walls are being painted, in preparation for Joan Curtiss' move to the 2nd floor. Furniture will be ordered and tables moved around to make the 2nd floor information technologies space welcoming and functional for staff.
- An ad hoc committee has been formed to review the services provided by administrative assistants at BTI. A summary and recommendations will be submitted to David by April 1.
- David has continued to work hard identifying new board members. We hope to have some "takers" by the May Board meeting.

I expected that a Model T engine would be installed momentarily. We came to a large recovery room and each wagon was detached and placed in a numbered position. I was inserted into Position 8, and I complained bitterly when it wasn't Position 6. I had expected that we would circle the wagons. Mine was one of sixteen wagon beds, each with a clip attached to the front bumper, and in each clip was an X-ray showing the radio-opaque image of our hip appliances. I liked mine the best, and when I insisted on it, the people on both sides of me took umbrage and a kind of riot ensued. That is, if you can imagine the mayhem produced by three crippled and drugged people, each bound like mummies in separate beds. This was inappropriate behavior in the Recovery Room, I was told. I said, "Go blow bubbles," and fell back asleep. I was too tough for them.

After a couple of hours of intermittent drowsing, my wagon began to move again. Two enormous men (trained in the recent L.A. riots, but ejected for roughness) pulled me out of the recovery room, onto an elevator, and deposited me in a room with a loud crash of bedpans and urinals. The room now contained four people, with my spot being in the darkest corner farthest from the window. The Cornell connection was really paying off, as I knew it would.

I was still drugged from the surgery and was numb from my chest down. The day nurse came to my bedside. "My name is Nurse Pelvis. If you need anything, push the button and I may or may not come."

I said, "Oh, you're a volunteer?"

"No, but I only do what I get paid for. Do you want your back rubbed?"

"Ummm, that sounds great!"

"We charge extra. It'll be about \$495 a rub. Medicare doesn't pay anything."

"Well, \$4.95 is worth it," I giggled then fell back asleep again.

Someone shook me. "Wake up! I'm connecting a Morpho-Magic needle into your left arm. If you feel hip pain, push this button twice. That'll give you just the right amount of narcotic to relieve any pain. O.K.?" I rolled my eyes and mumbled, "Wizza."

Later, after reality had returned a bit, and the numbness had disappeared, the pain entered. Click-click went Morpho-magic. The pain stopped. "This is miraculous!" I cried silently.

During the night, I had ample opportunity to test Morpho-Magic. It never failed. "I feel so good when I click-click, what'll happen if I click-click-click-click?" I tried it and soon I was far above my pain, the hospital, the surgery, everything. Whee!! Click-click-click-click.

Later that morning, Nurse Cholera and Dr. Sopor came by. Words from Dr. Sopor: "Check his morpho usage, Nurse Cholera." She pushed a bunch of buttons, her eyes widened, and she exclaimed, "He's used it all up!!"

"Do you realize what you have done?" cried Dr. Sopor.

"Oogle," I said.

"You've used your 3-day supply in less than a day! What do you have to say about that?!"

"Ba ruppa duppa duppa dup," I responded.

"Is he an addict, Nurse Cholera?" She pulled the sheet off and checked both arms and legs. "No, but he has a mild case of eczema on his left elbow," she said.

"Well, cut him off the machine. No more morpho-magic for him! He'll have to beg you if he wants a painkiller."

"Oh for crissakes," she cried. "How'm I gonna get any sleep?" She looked at me. "Are you gonna pester me all night?"

"Oo-pa, oo-pa, oo-pa," I gurgled.

Dr. Osso Bucu, the surgeon, came by. Our conversation went something like this:

Dr. Bucu: Hello there. How are you doing?

Me: Hello?

Dr. Bucu: I said, how are you doing?

Me: Hello?

Dr. Bucu: Do you hear me?

Me: I can't hear you.

Dr. Bucu: Did we do something to his ears, nurse?

Me: Hang up and dial again.

Hospital life continued in that exciting manner for several days, with me pushing the call button and, on occasion, getting the response: "Whaddaya want!!!?" The food was modified nouvelle cuisine. Sandwiches were unique. A slice of Levy's rye bread surrounded by two slices of Spam. Otter haunches stuffed with mercury-laden mackerel was the piece de resistance. This did little to satisfy my obsession for stuffed derma.

The days dragged on insufferably. There was little to do and I considered suffocating myself in a giant blintz. I finally resorted to writing a monograph entitled, "Do Aardvarks Lose Their Baby Teeth?" after which I worked on obtaining rights to open an Orange Julius stand in Day Hall, which is still pending.

For reasons that escape me, I was released from the hospital two days early. There was silence as I was wheeled down the hall past the nurse's station, but as the elevator doors were closing, I thought I heard loud whooping and cheering. Something good must have happened.

THE HUB

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