



# BBS Bulletin

July/August 2005

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## Unique Challenges for Women in Science

Sarah Wojiski Joseph (G4)

Regardless of your opinion on the content and subsequent media coverage of President Larry Summers' remarks, one thing has become clear to all: the issues involving women in academic science are real, important, and cannot be ignored. The President's comments have raised awareness in the Harvard community of the difficulties that women face in science disciplines, and have sparked extensive dialog - in the lunchroom, the classroom, and the administrative boardroom. The question is, what can the University do to both diminish barriers that prevent the advancement of women in science and promote success of women at all stages of their scientific careers? While the gender demographics of the BBS program would suggest a thriving pool of female graduate students in the life sciences, the fact remains that in every subsequent level of the academic science career path, the female representation declines considerably.

So, what exactly are some of the issues that lead to the decline in women scientists at the higher academic levels? Several efforts have been undertaken at Harvard to answer this question. On February 3, 2005, two separate task forces were created to explore issues and make recommendations regarding gender equity at Harvard. The Task Force on Women Faculty was charged with focusing on the state of women faculty at Harvard, while the Task Force on Women in Science and Engineering was created to identify factors affecting the retention of women in science at all stages of their careers. (For complete reports from both task forces, please visit <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2005/05.19/01-taskforce.html>). From discussions with women at all stages of their scientific pursuits - from undergraduate to tenured faculty - a few key issues appear to be at the heart of women's decision to leave science. These issues include a lack of positive female role models, inadequate mentorship and advising

in many science departments, and the difficulties in pursuing scientific careers in the context of family obligations.

A minority in many science disciplines, women often lack other female peers at the same career stage, as well as female role models in more advanced career stages. Without the presence of peers and role models, women can often feel isolated and unsupported in their work environments, contributing to general dissatisfaction and negativity towards pursuit of a career in science. Additionally, women have reported inadequate access to basic information and programs that could provide support and guidance during graduate school and beyond, for instance, a centralized website for graduate student support.

Women also face unique challenges in trying to balance their careers with family responsibilities. This is a particularly acute issue for women in science because of the nature of our discipline. As compared to other fields, the training period for science disciplines can be much longer, due to the laboratory expertise required to keep up with ever-changing technological advances. As a result, most graduate students do not finish their doctoral training until their late 20's to early 30's. If a woman wishes to pursue an academic career, she will then often spend the next decade in post-doctoral or junior faculty positions. The pressures of spending key childbearing years in temporary and transitional career situations, requiring long working hours with low salaries, often force women to choose between having children and having a career in academic science. These factors are highly influential in the decision to leave science altogether. For women that do continue to pursue science careers while raising children, inadequate childcare resources often place a significant burden on families and create an additional barrier to professional

*see 'Women' on page 3*

# Renting in Boston

Nicole Mammarella (G2)

An early and often recurring challenge for BBS students is finding a place to live. With a limited budget, a city full of possibilities, and a tight real estate market, the hunt for an apartment can be one of the first hurdles on the way to a Ph.D. The following are suggestions designed primarily to address the needs of entering G1s that are encountering the Boston rental market for the first time, but upper-years should also find some helpful hints.

When beginning your search for an apartment, it's critical to decide what is most important to you so that you can focus your search. Do you want to be able to walk to the Longwood Medical Area? Are you a private person who needs a studio or one-bedroom or would you prefer the company of living with roommates? What is your limit for rent? If you don't decide on what you are looking for before you begin, you will be overwhelmed.

## What to look for

Go see the apartment! If you are new to Boston and particularly if you are new to urban living, you should see what you're getting into. It is helpful for out-of-towners to come to Boston for several days in the summer to choose an apartment. Check the security of the building and make sure you feel safe in and around the building. Make sure the apartment receives enough light so you won't develop seasonal affective disorder. While a little effort will secure you a nice apartment in a fun neighborhood, you will also likely encounter a number of dark, dirty, rundown apartments in unsafe buildings populated by loud and rude neighbors. Students coming from other areas are often shocked by some of the apartments they encounter during their search. But if you make it clear to your realtor what you need to be happy and come prepared to look at a lot of apartments, you will find something you love.

Also important to note is that most leases in Boston start on June 1<sup>st</sup> or September 1<sup>st</sup> and landlords usually start offering apartments approximately 3 months before the end of the current lease. Off peak leases do exist, but if you're looking for one, plan on expending a little more effort.

When considering apartments, it is important to determine whether heat and hot water are included in the rent. Heat and hot water can be massive and unpredictable expenses. Having these expenses included in your rent is highly recommended and you should expect a significantly lower rent for apartments that don't include them. Parking is also a key consideration if you intend to bring a car. Certain neighborhoods have on-street parking, but this requires that you register your car in Massachusetts and obtain a city sticker. Off-street parking spaces often cost roughly \$150 per month when they're available. Be clear on your neighborhood's parking requirements before committing to an apartment. For example, there is no overnight on-street parking in Brookline, so an off-street parking space is

mandatory if you intend to live there with a car.

## Where to look

In deciding where to look, you should first consider what types of commutes are acceptable to you. The medical school is accessible by the D and E lines on the T, the M2 Shuttle that runs between the medical school and the Harvard campus in Cambridge, several public bus lines, and a commuter rail line. Students also opt to bike or walk, and a few are able to commute by car although this isn't a viable option for most.

Other factors such as the availability of the type of housing you want, the available nightlife, amenities, and parking situations should be considered. Handouts were distributed during recruitment (if you want this year's updated copy, contact [nicole\\_mammarella@student.hms.harvard.edu](mailto:nicole_mammarella@student.hms.harvard.edu)) detailing different Boston neighborhoods. Detailed information won't be duplicated here, but the most popular areas are the Fenway/Kenmore Square area and the various neighborhoods of Cambridge and Brookline.

## How to find it

In addition to finding your own leads (see below), you should schedule appointments with several realtors. Remember that you'll have to leave a deposit and possibly the first month's rent upon signing the lease, so you should make sure you have access to a sizeable bit of cash in one of your accounts before beginning your apartment hunt. When dealing with realtors you should be aware of the fee/no fee distinction in Boston. Renting a "Fee" apartment means that you will pay the realtor's fee directly. In a "No Fee" apartment, the landlord will pay the realtor. A realtor's fee is commonly one month's rent, which makes the fee/no fee distinction an important one for most BBS students.

Other means of finding an apartment include traditional classifieds found in Boston papers: [www.boston.com/news/globe/](http://www.boston.com/news/globe/) and [www.bostonherald.com](http://www.bostonherald.com); Harvard-associated websites: [mycourses.med.harvard.edu/tradingpost.asp](http://mycourses.med.harvard.edu/tradingpost.asp) and [www.hms.harvard.edu/operations/vh/](http://www.hms.harvard.edu/operations/vh/); and other online listings: [bostonapartments.com/](http://bostonapartments.com/) and [boston.craigslist.org/](http://boston.craigslist.org/).

Roommates can be found at the Harvard site listed above, by contacting your classmates, or by branching out into the larger Boston community. Rooms in larger apartments are often listed in the newspapers or on Craigslist by people looking for a roommate. If you attend religious services, contacting the church, synagogue, etc in Boston that you intend to join can be a way of finding good opportunities.

Whether you use a realtor, deal directly with the landlord or move into an apartment with roommates, you will have to sign a lease. Read the lease and any addendums carefully before signing it. For more information on tenant's rights and legal issues related to renting, see: <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/landlord.html>.

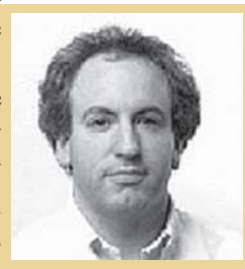
see 'Renting' on page 4

## John G. Flanagan: Professor of Cell Biology

Danny M. Chou (G2)

**Research Interests:** The role of cell-to-cell signaling in setting up spatial organization in biology, particularly the development of precise patterns of connections in the nervous system.

**Beginnings:** Despite his British accent and education, John Flanagan was actually born in Princeton, NJ. His father was the editor of *Scientific American* for 37 years, his mother was a science writer, and his step-father a botanist. Flanagan moved to Oxford at the tender age of 7, and showed an early inclination towards science. Chemistry was his favorite subject in high school, and his father once gave him Stryer's *Biochemistry* textbook as a gift. His interests led him to study biochemistry at the University of Oxford in England. Flanagan worked at the MRC in Gordon Koch's lab during his first summer there and went on to publish a *Nature* paper, where he demonstrated for the first time the association of a cell surface molecule with the cytoskeleton.



**Graduate School and Beyond:** After receiving his

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*Women, continued from page 1*

success.

While the situation appears grim, all hope is not lost! In fact, as you read this article, many positive changes are taking place around Harvard in order to better serve its female scientists. In February, a group of female graduate students in the biology departments in Cambridge organized an informal luncheon at which graduate women in science could share their professional experiences, identify key factors blocking the success of women in science, and brainstorm recommendations to counter these factors. The luncheon was a huge success, and as a result the Harvard Graduate Women in Science and Engineering (HGWISE) organization was born. The goal of HGWISE is to support Harvard graduate women in science and engineering, by forming an active network with a website, mailings, meetings, sponsored talks, and social events such as lunches and casual mixers. Although still in its infancy, HGWISE has already begun to achieve some of its goals (a weekly rock-climbing night at the Vanderbilt Hall gym is just one of the social events to come out of the organization). For more information about the events and activities of HGWISE, and to get involved, email the officers at [gradwis@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:gradwis@fas.harvard.edu), or contact me, the Longwood Area representative, at [sarah\\_joseph@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:sarah_joseph@hms.harvard.edu).

In addition to the establishment of HGWISE, the February luncheon also created a framework from which the Task Force developed their recommendations to the university. A full summary of these recommendations can

undergraduate degree, Flanagan attended graduate school at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the University of Cambridge in England. He worked on the mechanism of immunoglobulin gene rearrangements in Terry Rabbitts' laboratory for his PhD thesis, and came to Harvard in 1986 to do his postdoctoral work in Phil Leder's lab. Flanagan initially came to the Leder lab to continue his work on the mechanism of immunoglobulin gene rearrangements. However, his arrival coincided with the Leder lab's transition from the field of immunology to the study of oncogenes that were also cell surface receptors. Flanagan was encouraged by Leder to switch fields, and this led to Flanagan's work on a new proto-oncogene during his postdoc. Flanagan soon revolutionized the field by developing a method that employs the use of a receptor extracellular domain as an "antibody" to find ligands of that receptor. After his postdoc, Flanagan was recruited to Harvard as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cell Biology in 1991. His work on the c-kit proto-oncogene led him to the field of neurobiology, where he made significant contributions to the field despite having no formal training in neurobiology. He became a HMS Professor in 2001 and

*see 'Flanagan' on page 5*

be downloaded (website noted above). They include many concrete proposals directed specifically toward removing the barriers to women's success in science careers, such as (1) the establishment of community building programs within and between science departments to promote collegial interactions and integration of graduate students within the scientific community, (2) the establishment of programs that promote mentoring, networking, and professional development, and appointment of a GSAS coordinator to oversee these programs, (3) the establishment of an office for postdoctoral affairs, and (4) the development of better means to track graduate student progress. Additionally, the Task Force has specifically addressed family issues by encouraging the university to provide paid maternity leave for doctoral students and post docs, create new childcare scholarships for doctoral students, and consider extending employee assistance programs and dependent care funds to doctoral students.

Ultimately, there is a long road ahead for the University as it works to promote gender equity in the sciences, but we can all be a bit more optimistic now that concrete steps have been taken and goals are now in place to implement change. And of course, the best way to see change happen is to be a part of it, so I encourage everyone to get involved in promoting a positive environment for all graduate students – both to make our years here as positive an experience as possible, and to increase the likelihood that once we receive that piece of paper saying "PhD", we end up actually using it.

### Once you've got it

Something that is often overlooked or dismissed by BBS students is renter's insurance. Your landlord and your parents' policies will not in most cases cover any misadventures you experience in your new apartment. A few BBS students have been the victims of robbery or fire in recent years and much of the following advice comes from Julie Huang, a recently graduated BBS student whose apartment was gutted in a fire last year.

Many graduate students make the mistake of thinking that they don't really own that much and therefore it isn't worth insuring it. But if you are the victim of a fire or a robbery, imagine having to replace your entire wardrobe in a matter of days. Consider the expense of buying an entire kitchen full of plates, cookware, and spices in one day. Replacing just the absolute basics will easily run into thousands of dollars. On the other hand, an insurance policy that usually costs between \$100 and \$200 per year, depending on the extent of coverage and your particular situation, will give you the means to reestablish yourself if the worst should happen.

When you are ready to purchase a policy, a point of

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## Out & About: Restaurant Week 2005

Annie Yang (G4)

Gastronomical deprivation can be a common affliction here on the Longwood campus. Whether it be sub-par subs at the Galleria, Chinese from 'the truck', or the daily special at your favorite cafeteria, these meals often leave you desperate for tastier options.

Well, the perfect solution comes once a year, for a week in August. Dating back four years, Restaurant Week has become a much-anticipated, annual event in Boston. It is a chance to feast at some of the hottest, most critically acclaimed restaurants in town – at prices even grad students can afford. A three-course meal (sans drinks and gratuity) is available for \$20.05 (to commemorate the year – get it?) at lunch, and \$30.05 at dinner. While this may not seem like much of a deal if you are dining at McDonald's, it is a complete steal at places like Mistral, Radius, Hamersley's Bistro, or Icarus. An appetizer alone at these \$\$\$ restaurants could set you back 20 dollars.

The Restaurant Week deal does not give you access to the full menu. While you are certainly free to order a la carte (and pay accordingly), most Restaurant Week patrons stick to the fixed menu that offers several choices in each category: appetizer, entree, and dessert. They generally do a good job of accommodating vegetarian and carnivorous appetites alike. Since Restaurant Week is meant to attract new diners, there is plenty incentive for chefs to put forth better wares. You may not get the filet mignon, but it won't be scraps from the kitchen, either. Portions may also be somewhat smaller than usual, but with three courses, you shouldn't be starving at the end of your meal.

particular importance is to make sure you secure a "replacement value" policy. Many cheaper policies will only reimburse you for the assessed value of the item at the time of its loss and not the actual cost to replace it. Remember that if you do lose your belongings to fire or theft, you won't have time to wait for sales or scrounge around yard sales; you'll need a new computer immediately and aren't going to be happy if the insurance company tells you that your 4-year old computer was worth a few hundred dollars and that you'll have to cover the remaining cost of a new computer.

It's also critical to document your belongings in advance. After a crisis, you aren't going to remember everything you had in your apartment and the insurance company isn't going to be interested in taking your word that you had 200+ CDs in the apartment. At least once a year, use a camera or camcorder to document your belongings. Then store the pictures or video somewhere other than your apartment. Send them to your parents or give them to a friend who doesn't live on the same block as you.

Although Boston is a large and expensive rental market with all the usual challenges and problems of renting, it is a wonderful place to live. A bit of common sense and a diligent search will find you the apartment you want.

My cohorts and I have enjoyed places like Aujourd'hui, the Ritz Carlton, and Blu (the potato gnocchi alone is worth the trip to this trendy eatery located at the Sport Club/LA). If you're lucky enough to have a car (or a hungry friend who does), try Lumiere, a French restaurant in West Newton that caters to wealthy suburbanites and faculty.

This year, Restaurant Week takes place from August 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>. Pre-event advertising indicates that over 90 restaurants will be participating. Check the list at <http://www.bostonusa.com/visitor/resdet.php?seqnum=9680&type=event>, or do a quick internet search for 'Boston restaurant week' for more information.

Once you decide on a restaurant, make your reservations early. Call the restaurant directly, and let them know you want a reservation for Restaurant Week. As may be expected, slots at the trendiest restaurants fill up quickly, and some are available for only lunch *or* dinner, not both. You should obviously state your desired date and time, but flexibility and persistence (keep checking back for cancellations) may help get you into the most coveted places.

Lastly, another perk of Restaurant Week is the opportunity to shed those coomassie-stained shorts and T-shirts emblazoned with 'attractive' vendor logos. Summer dresses, pressed pants, and crisp shirts will show that your fashion sense is as refined as your Restaurant Week palate. Bon Appetit!

## Mel B. Feany: Assistant Professor of Pathology

Yao Chen (G3)

**Research Interest:** Modeling human neurodegenerative diseases in *Drosophila*. The Feany lab uses fly genetics to dissect out the pathways involved in diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

**Beginnings:** Feany grew up in a small town in Oregon. Growing up in a rural area, she originally did not consider becoming a scientist, but had wanted to become a doctor instead because she thought medicine would be a very fulfilling career. When she came to college at Harvard however, Feany worked in Margaret Livingstone's lab in the neurobiology department, where she used fly genetics to study learning and memory. Feany fell in love with science through this experience, and decided to pursue an MD/PhD afterwards.

**Graduate school and beyond:** Feany went to medical school at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. During this time, she fell in love with pathology, and really enjoyed looking at tissues under a microscope. To her, these observations reveal a wealth of clinical and scientific information, and often suggest basic questions and interesting mechanisms which she could integrate into both her clinical work and her scientific inquiries. This interest has continued to this day. Besides her basic research, Feany spends time looking at brain biopsy and autopsy materials as part of her neuropathology service at Brigham's. She is glad that her clinical interests and her research can intermesh so well!

For her PhD, Feany continued working in the Livingstone lab at Harvard. She had a lot of fun during this period studying learning and memory mutants in *Drosophila*. She pursued a number of projects, one of which involved the cloning of the *amnesiac* gene that encodes a neuropeptide implicated in the fly memory process. She also studied other learning and memory mutants and characterized how their involvement in cyclic AMP biochemistry relates to learning and memory.

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*Flanagan, continued from page 3*

currently heads a lab of about 10 people, with an approximately equal ratio of postdocs to graduate students.

**Advice to Students:** You have to work on something you find truly exciting. Science can be pretty tough, but biology is in a tremendously exciting era and we are very fortunate to be part of this excitement. Perhaps the most difficult part of science is the uncertainty, and Flanagan came up with a personal trick while he was a postdoc to deal with it. Instead of worrying about whether difficult experiments will work, he was able to take the stress out of this process by assigning probabilities to the success rate and coming to terms with the fact that not all experiments will work.

**The Personal Side:** The humorous and approachable Harvard professor loves spending time with his wife and daughter. He enjoys skiing, hiking, and scuba diving. He

After her MD/PhD, Feany did her residency in neuropathology at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Several genes for neurodegenerative diseases were subsequently cloned during this period, and Feany became interested in the genetics of these diseases. The need to understand the



complex relationships between many genes in order to understand the diseases, coupled with limitations of human genetics and vertebrate models, led Feany to model these diseases in the fruit fly. It was a risky idea at the time because it was not clear whether it is relevant to study human genes in flies. However, the

potential payoff of this idea is so great that Feany pursued it as a postdoctoral fellow in Welcome Bender's lab. She created fly models of Parkinson's disease during her postdoc and later created models of Alzheimer's, which she continues to work on after starting her own lab at Harvard.

**Outside the lab:** Feany's twin boy and girl are only eight months old, and they are taking up all her spare time right now. Before she had her twins, she enjoyed traveling with her husband, going to restaurants, and reading widely. She met her husband in college, and their interests have not changed much over the years. For example, Mary Chung's Restaurant around Central Square was one of their favorites in college, and they continued to go there often until the recent arrival of their twins.

**Advice to graduate students:** Focus! Look around and explore in the first two years, but then you need to focus to complete a significant piece of work.

**What would you take if your office went on fire?** "My double-headed microscope!" (Feany spends a lot of time looking at slides under this microscope with her students.)

also loves theater and traveling. Flanagan visits England once every 2-3 years and loves Italy for the culture. Though it sounds counterintuitive at first, Flanagan loves hiking in England because there are no trees. He quickly explained his logic by pointing out the spectacular views one can see when those pesky trees aren't in the way.

**You Saw It Here First:** Chances are, you may one day hear about Flanagan's talking cat on Oprah. Apparently, the Egyptian Mau, similar to the first cats domesticated by the Egyptians, will say the phrase "go out" when he wants to, well, go somewhere. He started talking at a young age, when he was only 6 months old, and continues to chat away to this day.

# Community Service Profile: Science in the News

Jesse Boehm (G4) and Amy Vashlishan (G3)

## What is the program you work for and what type of service(s) do they/you provide and why?

Science in the News (SITN) is a graduate student group that aims to demystify and discuss today's hottest scientific topics with members of the general public. We do this in the form of an annual 9-week seminar series each fall that features headlining topics in science ranging from "Stem Cells and Cloning" and "Cancer and Personalized Medicine" to "Genetically Engineered Foods" and "Emerging Diseases." We also publish an email newsletter (SITNewsflash) that addresses a new science topic each month, as well as maintain a "Question and Answer" website for the public's year-round inquiries into how aspects of biology work. Science in the News was founded to address the inadequate level of general scientific literacy within the general public. At a time when science impacts the lives of Americans more than ever before, the level of understanding of important scientific issues among the public is not sufficient to give them the power to make informed decisions. We feel that it is the responsibility of scientists to act as communicators so that the public can make intelligent decisions when they encounter science in such places as the voting booth, grocery store, or doctor's office.

## Are there any requirements such as training and education?

No, but most people participate by presenting a topic that lies close to their area of expertise. For those who are interested in the program but don't want to give a lecture, we have also designed non-speaking roles that involve coordinating or writing/researching for our web features.

## Where is your program located?

Our fall seminar series is given at the Harvard Medical School. Additionally, we also gave lectures at area community centers in Mattapan, Mission Hill (bilingually), and East Boston last year. This year, we will be giving our entire series at the Mattapan Family Service Center in addition to the lectures at the medical school. We have also given talks at educators' conferences and the Museum of Science.



## What is the most rewarding aspect for you?

Fielding all the questions at the seminars is where it's easiest to feel that you're reaping the rewards of the experience. A person will ask a question that's the same question scientists are currently asking themselves and you know they're processing all the information and really getting

into the lectures. Even better are the myth-based or out of left field questions that remind you of the difference you're making just by correcting the misunderstanding of that one person on that one issue.

## Why did you choose to work for this program?

As scientists, we find our work interesting and exciting, but most of us can't give our parents a decent explanation of what we do. That thought is a big draw to SITN and a main focus of what the group works to do—explain science in a way that our parents or grandparents would understand. Also, we are both compelled by the thought that if we, as scientists,



aren't explaining the science, society may be getting what little science they are exposed to from unreliable sources. The science that reaches the public is often diluted down and chopped into hyped-up sound bites or dramatically foreboding headlines. We

have an obligation as scientists to communicate our work without all the jargon and to give the public the biological basics to understand the real science behind what they may hear in the news. We hope our work helps them sift through the hype of "research breakthroughs" and interpret any ethical or consumer implications themselves.

## Why should students/faculty work for your program?

SITN is an absolutely unique program in the Boston area and is one of the few forums where we as researchers can share our knowledge directly with the public of Boston. We have a responsibility to communicate science facts to the public and our program affords graduate students this opportunity. When the question asked of you begins with "My mother has breast cancer..." rather than "Which restriction enzyme should I use....," you are solidly grounded in the bigger picture of what being a scientist is all about. And the audience always appreciates our efforts tremendously.

## How can others get more information about your program?

Anyone can check out our website at [www.SITNBoston.com](http://www.SITNBoston.com) to find links to videos of sample lectures, powerpoint presentations from our talks, archives of newsletters, schedules, news, and the question and answer site.

## Recent BBS Student Publications:

\*These authors contributed equally to this publication.

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## Announcements:

**Emily Arias** (G4) and John Foley were engaged on June 10th at the summit of Mount Washington.

**Jesse Boehm** (G4) married the well-known supermodel Julie Bard in Shelburne, Vermont on July 9th. Ten days in French Polynesia followed shortly thereafter!

**Nicole Collins** (G5) was recently engaged to Mark Solimini. A wedding is planned for May 2006.

**The Harvard Dudley Dragon Boat Team** won the regional races in the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival of Boston on June 12, 2005. In addition, the team placed in the top three in the overall competition, beating out 25 other teams.

**Robin Williamson** (recent grad) will be the new deputy editor for the American Journal of Human Genetics where she and **Cynthia Morton** (BBS faculty), the new editor-in-chief, will be responsible for the journal starting with the January 2006 issue.

# Joshua M. Kaplan: Professor of Genetics

Sabrina Hom (G2) and Michelle Burbea

**Research Interests:** The cell biology of synaptic transmission in *C. elegans*.

**Beginnings:** Josh Kaplan was born on the East Coast but was raised in Minnesota, where he would enjoy the scenery while driving around in a Volkswagen until the car caught fire. As a high schooler, Kaplan was a ranked ping pong player. He went on to Yale where he majored in biology and minored in political science; highlights of his college experience in the seventies include occupying an empty classroom while eating pickled herring and cramming for an exam.



**Graduate School and Beyond:** Summer jobs working in labs as an undergraduate convinced Kaplan to attend the PhD program at UCSF, where he studied the association of Src with cellular membranes as a joint student with Harold Varmus and Michael Bishop. As a postdoc in Robert Horvitz's lab at MIT, Kaplan carried out twelve one-month screens in

his first year. The most promising of these screens led to the identification of neurons that sense painful stimuli in *C. elegans*, a discovery which resulted in a faculty position at Harvard. After spending several years at UC Berkeley, where he received tenure, Kaplan and his entire lab returned to Boston. He received a BBS Mentoring Award in 2004.

**Advice to Students:** 1) Have fun and don't take yourself too seriously. 2) There is always going to be someone that you want to compare yourself to, just don't do it. 3) Make sure you reference everybody when speaking or writing. 4) Before you say something, always ask yourself, "How will this comment help me?" 5) Don't set the lab on fire.

**The Personal Side:** Kaplan enjoys cooking, eating out, playing with his kids, going on vacation to dude ranches and Cancun (or anything with room service), and being the recipient of intricate practical jokes played on him by the lab while they reminisce about Berkeley. He also spends his time listening to Credence Clearwater Revival and anything by the Talking Heads, and watching the "baseball is a team sport" scene from the *Untouchables*.



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