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**[Science on the Hill: Influencing Science Policy](#)**

**Kenna Mills Shaw (BBS Alumnus)**

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**[The Network: An Organization for Women](#)**

**Nicole Mammarella (G2)**

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### **Faculty Profiles:**

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### **The *Other* Cape - North Shore Summer Delights**

**By Natalie Gilks (G1)**

Looking for a daytrip to get you out of the city? Head for the Cape! No, not Cape Cod. Cape Ann, about 50 minutes north of Boston by car. Having spent many a childhood summer day (and one darn chilly New Year's Eve, actually) on the beaches of Gloucester and Rockport, it is my completely biased opinion that there is no better way to play lab-hooky than to head to the North Shore for some sand, sun, sightseeing and shopping. Here are a few ideas...

### **Bulletin Announcements**



## Recent BBS Student Publications:

**Beck LM Jr** (BBS grad), **Goodwin AM** (G8) and D'Amore PA. (2004). Culture of large vessel endothelial cells on floating collagen gels promotes a phenotype characteristic of endothelium in vivo. *Differentiation* 72(4): 162-170.

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**Becker EBE** (G4) and Bonni A. (2004). Cell cycle regulation of neuronal apoptosis in development and disease. *Prog Neurobiol.* 72(1):1-25.

**Casolari JM** (G6), **Brown CR** (G2), Komili, S (G4, Biophysics), **West J** (G2), **Hieronimus, H** (G5) and Silver, PA. (2004). Genome-wide localization of the nuclear transport machinery couples transcriptional status and nuclear organization. *Cell* 117(4):427-439.

**Casolari JM** (G6) and Silver PA. (2004). Guardian at the gate: preventing un-spliced pre-mRNA export. *Trends Cell Biol.* 14:222-225.

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Gross JD, **Moerke NJ** (G6), Von der Haar T, Lugovskoy AA, Sachs AB, McCarthy J, and Wagner G: Ribosome loading onto the mRNA cap is driven by conformational coupling between eIF4G and eIF4E. *Cell* 115, 739-750 (2003).

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**Shendure J** (G4), Mitra RD, Varma C, Church GM. (2004). Advanced sequencing technologies: methods and goals. *Nat Rev Genet.* 5(5):335-44.

Keese CR, Wegener J, **Walker SR** (G3), Giaever I. (2004). Electrical wound-healing assay for cells in vitro. *PNAS* 101 (6):1554-9.

**Wrobel CN** (G4), Debnath J, Lin E, **Beausoleil S** (G3), Roussel MF, Brugge JS. (2004). Autocrine CSF-1R activation promotes Src-dependent disruption of mammary epithelial architecture. *J Cell Biol.* 165(2):263-73.

**Zhang LV** (G3), Wong SL, King OD and Roth FP. (2004). Predicting co-complexed protein pairs using genomic and proteomic data integration. *BMC Bioinformatics* 5:38

\*These authors contributed equally.

### **Announcements:**

**Lan Zhang** (G3) was awarded a \$20,000 one year graduate fellowship from the American Association of University Women.

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**Steve Blacklow**

Professor of Pathology  
By: Maria Naylor (G1)

**Steve Blacklow** **Research Interest:** Through viewing proteins as biological macromolecules, the Blacklow lab seeks to gain insights into the relationships between protein structure and function in determining receptor-ligand specificity. Of particular interest are receptors relating to human medical conditions, such as Notch in leukemia and the LDL receptor in cholesterol uptake.

**Beginnings:** Blacklow grew up outside of Boston, and after a brief misguided stint as a "Rocky Horror" regular ("The Graduate" is now his favorite movie), he enrolled at Harvard College with the intention of becoming a doctor. His senior year brought him his first taste of bench work in Jeremy Knowles' lab, where he researched the role of diffusion as the rate-limiting step in triosephosphate isomerase catalysis. Blacklow credits Ron Raines, a graduate student in the lab at the time, with cultivating his interest in research.

**Graduate School and Beyond:** After graduation, Blacklow left Boston to work in an organic synthesis lab at Stanford and a year later came back to pursue his M.D./Ph.D. at Harvard. He returned to Jeremy Knowles' lab for his thesis work, investigating the kinetics of enzyme catalysis through the study of crippled triosephosphate isomerases and their pseudo-revertants. His post-doctorate work on HIV and SIV fusion machinery was completed in Peter Kim's laboratory at the Whitehead Institute.

**Advice to Grad Students:** As the perpetrator of several major lab goof-ups (none of which he wishes to be published), Blacklow strongly advises students to plan experiments carefully and anticipate any pitfalls.

**Worst Job:** The summer before his freshman year, Blacklow worked as a dishwasher at a nightclub/bad restaurant on Martha's Vineyard. After four nights of being referred to as "Hey you, dishwasher" and having various objects thrown at him by the cook, he quit.

**Odds and Ends:** Blacklow considers home life very important and devotes most of his free time to his family. He also enjoys working on his 150 year-old house (where T.S. Eliot once boarded) and plays basketball every Sunday without fail. Pet peeves include surprise discoveries of broken lab equipment, improper experimental controls, and bearing witness to an empty lab.

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## **The Network: An Organization for Women**

**Nicole Mammarella (G2)**

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Having friends outside the research community is always enjoyable and it is unfortunate that we rarely have the chance to form bonds with the rest of the university. Additionally, networking is critical at the professional level. There are many potential benefits of establishing contacts with other students who will eventually populate the realms of business, government, law, design, and education. The women of Harvard, however, now have a tool for overcoming these obstacles, crossing those graduate school borders and cultivating relationships throughout the university.

Begun this winter by a group of five women from the

Kennedy School of Government, The Network is a group that aims to create a "good old girls' network" amongst students from all ten of the Harvard graduate schools. The driving force behind The Network is the idea that having contacts in various graduate schools and diverse fields will allow women to tap into resources that otherwise would have been unavailable, and generally enrich their personal and professional lives. These benefits are likely to continue beyond graduate and professional school, offering participants friendships and professional contacts outside their own specialties. The leaders of The Network have set out to accomplish these goals by organizing events that will be conducive to building both professional connections and friendships.

The Network's launch featured a dinner with Alice Levine, who gave a keynote address on "Personal and Professional Leadership: Lessons from Climbing Mt. Everest." Ms. Levine is an accomplished businesswoman who has enjoyed successful careers in the health care industry and on Wall Street. In 2002, she took a break from her job at Goldman Sachs to lead the first American all-female team to the summit of Mount Everest. This team was also able to use their summit attempt to raise money for multiple charitable organizations helping children in both the United States and Nepal. Over 150 women attended the launch dinner.

Other events have included a discounted yoga session during finals week for both beginners and more experienced yoga enthusiasts. The Network e-mail list also disseminates information about women's events in Boston and nationwide. The Network's long-term plan is to have regular beer hours with each graduate school taking a turn as host. The first beer hour, held this spring, was hosted by the medical community at a local pub. Other plans for the coming year include small dinners, a system of beer hours in which each graduate school takes turns hosting, and the increased involvement of Harvard alumni. The events are designed to be entertaining get-togethers that will draw graduate students out of their laboratories and classrooms to an open environment where women are encouraged to meet new people.

To ensure that women from each school are represented and involved, The Network leadership includes a team from each graduate school. The Network's Longwood team has representatives from both BBS and medical students. The teams will be working to form sub-networks within their own communities and to influence the larger Network plans and organization.

Additionally, since this a new and growing organization, there are many leadership opportunities available. Organizers are currently looking to launch a fundraising program and organize a presence at orientation in the fall. Closer to home, Nina Dudnik, the BBS representative, is hopeful that we will soon have a BBS team within the Network and that collaboration within DMS will be increased. As she points out, complaints and worries are often voiced about the fact that the scientific research community is heavily male at the upper levels. The Network offers a unique opportunity to build connections within the research community. It will also provide useful tools as graduate students leave BBS and enter a primarily male-dominated professional environment. If you would like to become involved with The Network or learn more about this group, send an email to [Sara\\_Shenkan@ksg05.harvard.edu](mailto:Sara_Shenkan@ksg05.harvard.edu) to join their email list.

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**Max Nibert**

Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics  
By: Ray Shao (G5)

**Max Nibert** **Research Interest:** Basic aspects of the viral replication cycle using dsRNA viruses with an emphasis on virus-cell interaction, structure-function relationships in virus particles, and the assembly of virus particles.

**Beginnings:** Growing up in a small town Point Pleasant, West Virginia, Nibert was an active child, playing baseball as a shortstop and second baseman from little league until high school. Nibert was also an avid fisherman. When he was in high school, the book Viruses and the Nature of Life by Nobel winner Wendell Stanley piqued his interest in microorganisms. Nibert went on to study microbiology in college at Notre Dame. Working with Charles Kulpa, Nibert's undergraduate research studied thiobicilli and the screening of phage that would infect them. During two of the summers in college, Nibert worked in a clinical microbiology at his hometown's hospital and learned to look at plates and figure out what type of bacteria were growing on them.

**Graduate School and Beyond:** After graduating from Notre Dame, Nibert entered the MD/PhD program at Harvard. During his first summer at medical school, Nibert got a fellowship to do research in Bernard Fields' lab, working on the structure and function of reovirus outer caspid proteins. After getting his medical degree, Nibert did an residency in clinical microbiology while also continuing his research. Nibert accepted an assistant professorship at the University of Wisconsin at Madison after graduating from Harvard. Seven years later, he decided to give up his tenure at Wisconsin and moved back to Harvard as an associate professor.

**Outside Activities:** Nibert now spends most of his free time taking care of his eight-month old son Finn. He and his wife enjoy the city, the museums, the beaches and the hiking opportunities that New England offers. Nibert likes to eat out and sample different foods. His favorite food is sushi and he highly recommends Fugakyu on Beacon Street. Nibert enjoys traveling and particularly likes Vancouver, for the city setting, nice parks, and great food. He enjoys Geneva for the opportunity to hike the Swiss Alps. In addition, he likes Acadia National Park and the area just north of San Francisco Bay including Marin County, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Napa Valley.

**Which historical figure does he admire most?** Einstein, for his raw creativity, as well as his social consciousness.

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For the quintessential New England coastal town experience, go to Bearskin Neck, in downtown Rockport. This wharf on Rockport Harbor is full of unique shops, art galleries, great views and even greater seafood. My favorite seafood place is called The Fish Shack (no joke), on Dock Square. Half fish market and half restaurant, you choose your lobster, then either take it home or pay them a buck to cook it for you right there.

To hit the highlights in Gloucester, walk Stacey Boulevard (or "The 'Vaad", as locals call it) along Gloucester Harbor to Stage Fort Park, which passes the "Man at the Wheel" statue made famous in "The Perfect Storm". The rocky shore of the park overlooks the outer harbor and Eastern Point Lighthouse, and is a perfect picnicking spot.

The best beaches on Cape Ann are on the eastern-most side, facing the open Atlantic. In Gloucester, Good Harbor Beach is the place to go. Long Beach, just north of Good Harbor in Rockport, is a bit smaller and doesn't have a snack bar, but parking is cheaper and there are not as many people. Both beaches are about a mile long with clean sand and decent surf, though my sister swears the waves are better at Good Harbor.

If you are looking for something historical, Hammond Castle is worth the trip ([www.hammondcastle.org](http://www.hammondcastle.org)). John Hayes Hammond Jr., the noted inventor, decided to build himself a castle, complete with dungeons, on the shores of Gloucester in 1926. The castle is now a museum, so you can see for yourself all the designs of this creative genius, including a sprinkler system in the ceiling of the courtyard that "rains" on the plants below.

There are plenty of other activities, like fishing, boating and whale-watching. Information is available at [cape-ann.com](http://cape-ann.com), [rockportusa.com](http://rockportusa.com) and [gloucesterma.com](http://gloucesterma.com). For those of you without cars, Cape Ann is accessible by public transportation. Take the MBTA Commuter Rail ([mbta.com](http://mbta.com)) from North Station to either the Rockport or Gloucester stop. Many destinations are within walking distance from the train, and most are along the bus routes of the Cape Ann Transportation Authority ([cantran.com](http://cantran.com)). CATA buses will pick you up anywhere along the route if you flag them down, even if it is not a designated stop.

So, put down the pipetman and back away from your bench. Your bugs will still be there when you get back from the beach!

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I have personally had a long-standing interest in public policy and science education. Now, working at the NIH, I am reminded daily of how important it is for scientists to become active in all the decisions that affect our research. Thus, for those individuals who are interested, I would like to share some of the information I have learned on how to become involved in science policy.

### **Dr. Smith Goes to Washington: The JSCPP and "Capitol Hill Days"**

Several times a year, dozens of scientists converge on Washington, DC with the objective of convincing politicians to maintain high levels of funding for biomedical research. In 1990, the Joint Steering Committee for Public Policy

(JSCPP) was started as an umbrella organization of the three major biomedical research organizations: The American Society for Cell Biology, the Genetics Society of America, and the Society for Neuroscience. To encourage scientists to advocate for biomedical research funding, JSCPP sponsors "Capitol Hill Advocacy Days" during which scientists meet with members of Congress and their staff to educate them on the importance of biomedical science. These meetings are open to PhD students, post-doctoral fellows, and university faculty members. Fortunately, there is broad bipartisan support for increases in funding for biomedicine. Thus, in practical terms, the primary role when meeting with members of Congress is sometimes only to put a face to the pipetman, serving as a gentle reminder that the government should continue to increase support for your current and future livelihood.

### **Dollars and Sense: Current Policy Issues Facing the JSCPP**

A primary focus of the lobbying efforts supported by the JSCPP is to ensure sustained support and increased funding for biomedical research through the budgets of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). A current concern is that fiscal support for these funding agencies is far below expected numbers. During the Clinton administration, Congress approved a proposal outlining a doubling of the NIH budget over a 10-year period. However, now that the budget has since doubled, "post-doubling" funding is suffering. With the national budget facing a \$521 billion deficit, the current proposal for the NIH and NSF recommends increases of 2.6% and 3.0%, respectively, for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, these numbers fall short of the 8-10% increases that scientists believe will be required for these funding agencies to continue financing research at their current level. With the rise in the number of scientists, new laboratories, and post-doctoral salaries, a significant budgetary increase for the NIH and NSF is necessary. Therefore, it is now especially critical that scientists remind elected officials of the importance of sufficient funding to ensure future advances in health care.

Another goal of the JSCPP is to encourage members of

Congress to join the Biomedical Research Caucus. This caucus is comprised of members of Congress who have a stated interest in scientific research. Congressional members and their staffs organize several meetings per year in which renowned scientists present their research to interested members, thereby keeping them updated on active areas of scientific investigation. As well as providing scientific education, these meetings also function as a reminder that basic research is a prerequisite to the development of future medical treatments - a concept they can easily take back to their constituents.

**Becoming Involved: Science Policy Beyond the Hill** In addition to "Capitol Hill Days" and the Biomedical Research Caucus, the JSCPP also promotes interaction between scientists and Congress throughout the year via a number of other avenues. If going to Capitol Hill does not appeal to you, you can still do your part from your computer. To keep abreast of current scientific issues on the Congressional agenda, you can sign-up to receive "Legislative Alerts" from the Congressional Liaison Committee (CLC). The CLC sends e-mails to its members alerting them of current pieces of legislation that may affect biomedical research. These updates also describe ways to contact your local Congressional office so you can write a quick e-mail to your Representative or Senator to express your opinion. For example, hundreds of scientists recently contacted their Representatives to encourage their support of a bi-partisan letter directed to President Bush regarding his administration's policy on stem cell research.

Additionally, individuals considering a career in science policy should check out fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS). These fellowships provide opportunities to gain long-term, hands-on experience. They last for one year and are designed to integrate scientific expertise with the policymaking institutions in the United States and overseas. Any level of involvement can have an impact on science policy. You do not need to make a career out of science policy in order to let your voice be heard. Everyone's input will affect the future of science and likely our own futures as well.

## **For More Information**

### **General Questions on Science Policy**

Feel free to contact me at [shawk@mail.nih.gov](mailto:shawk@mail.nih.gov).

### **JSCPP Website**

To learn about public policy and biomedical research, consult the JSCPP website at <http://jscpp.org>.

Individuals interested in participating in "Capitol Hill Days" can also become JSCPP members through this website.

### **JSCPP Legislative Alert E-mails**

To register, contact [CLC@JSCPP.ORG](mailto:CLC@JSCPP.ORG).

### **AAAS Fellowships in Science Policy**

Consult <http://fellowships.aaas.org/>.

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**David Sinclair**

Associate Professor of Pathology

By: Yao Chen (G2)

**David Sinclair** **Research Interest:** To understand conserved pathways that regulate the pace of aging in order to develop drugs that can prevent and treat diseases of old age.

**Beginnings:** Sinclair grew up on the edge of the Australian bush, and became interested in biology at an early age. At school, his favorite subjects were science and art, which he developed further into a career and a hobby, respectively. Sinclair initially wanted to become a marine biologist because he did not want to be stuck in a lab. Therefore, he majored in Marine Biology and Genetics at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), the Australian equivalent of MIT. While at college, however, he became tired of counting shells on the beach. He found himself studying Biochemistry and Molecular Biology for his Honors degree (a year of research work between undergraduate and PhD in Australia).

**Graduate School and Beyond:** After earning his Honors degree, Sinclair studied for his PhD at UNSW with Ian Dawes in yeast genetics lab. During his doctoral work, he purified and cloned the genes encoding yeast multi-enzyme complexes that are involved in amino acid metabolism. In 1995, Sinclair's mother was diagnosed with lung cancer, so he turned his attention to a field that he felt could have a big impact on the quality of people's lives. The only person he considered doing a postdoc with was Leonard Guarente at MIT, whose graduate students had just initiated a search for mutations that postpone aging in budding yeast. However, to go to Guarente's lab, he had to secure his own fellowship. After selling his car to buy the airline tickets to Boston for his interview, Sinclair was awarded a fellowship. Studying aging was considered crazy by many in the Guarente lab; even Sinclair had doubts about whether it was meaningful to study aging in yeast. In the end, Sinclair's courage to go into this new field paid off. He has shown that genomic instability is a cause of yeast aging, a discovery that even made the popular press. This discovery led to the identification of genes such as *SIR2* that regulate aging in numerous organisms.

**Hobbies:** Sinclair has a passion for any activity involving water. He loves sailing and windsurfing, and dreams of having his own sailing boat one day. His love for art continues. In his spare time, he draws to relax. His favorite artist is Ulrich Kulanek from Czech Republic, who also designed the Czech currency.

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