



N E W S L E T T E R

Australasian Society for Immunology Incorporated

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Making a Vaccine for HIV

A report from the NH&MRC program grant on "HIV infection: Immunobiology and Vaccine design"
Stephen Kent

This unique program spans the "bench to bedside" with research in basic murine immunobiology through non-human primate trials to clinical trials. The program started in January 2004, but grew out of long standing collaborations between Stephen Kent (Univ Melb), Ian Ramshaw (ANU), and David Cooper (UNSW), who together held a large (\$29m) NIH-funded HIV vaccine design and development team award. Peter Doherty's return to Australia at the University of Melbourne and his desire to contribute to efforts to understand protective immunity to HIV provided further impetus for the group. We now have a well-functioning framework with which to conduct basic HIV immunobiology research in mice, non-human primates and humans and subsequently evaluate promising vaccine candidates through to clinical trials. The spectrum of activity permits an iterative, hypothesis-driven, research effort that can efficiently guide advances in understanding protective immunity to chronic viruses and developing a safe and effective HIV vaccine.

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The administrative arrangements have been to a large extent transferred from the NIH structure to this program. CI's Kent, Ramshaw, and Cooper and PI's Thomson, Ramsay, Purcell, and Kelleher already collaborate intimately on the NIH vaccine grant, and Doherty and Turner add additional basic and applied immunological skills. The research program has three primary areas that combine to produce innovative approaches to development of novel prophylactic and therapeutic vaccines for HIV. These elements include improved understanding of immunobiology with direct focus on implications for HIV vaccines, novel strategies for prophylactic and therapeutic vaccination, together with highly effective clinical evaluation of promising vaccine candidates. The three sub-program areas are:

- 1) Strategic Studies of the Immune Response to Virus Infection/Persistence and

cont. p4



Ramshaw / Thomson Groups (JCSMR): (clockwise from left) Marianne Shoebridge, Donna Woltring, Scott Thomson, Ian Ramshaw, Jill Medveczky, Ke Gao, Stephanie Day, Charani Ranasinghe, Jodie Harrison. (Photo courtesy of Marc Fenning, JCSMR, ANU)

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Website

The ASI web site (www.wehi.edu.au/collegiate/ASI/) has been fully remodelled and updated. New services include:

- Downloadable forms for ASI awards,
- Positions vacant pages,
- Jobs wanted pages,
- Upcoming conferences listings,

as well as a plethora of links to sites of immunological interest at home and abroad. If you'd like your lab home pages linked to the site, would like to advertise a job or conference, or have a favourite immunology-related site that doesn't currently appear on the ASI site, please e-mail Judy Greer at j.greer@medicine.uq.edu.au

Email bulletin board

To subscribe to the ASI bulletin board, send an email to majordomo@explode.unsw.edu.au with the message: subscribe anz-imm.

EDITORIAL

It is with some trepidation that I approach the task of writing my first editorial for the ASI newsletter - not only because of the risk of boring you all, but also the very large task of following in the footsteps of Phil Hodgkin. Phil, I am sure you will all agree, has alternately informed and amused us with great skill over the last few years (three years as sole editor, and prior to that joint editor with Nick King, Guna Karupiah and Geeta Chuadri). He has moved on to new responsibilities as the Vice President of ASI for 2005, and President elect of ASI for 2005.

In the spirit of scientific endeavour, I am keen to experiment with some new 'columns' in the newsletter. In particular, I would like to encourage groups to write in to let us know about their research. I have started the ball rolling by approaching a number of groups holding NH&MRC program grants in immunology to write in about their research. In this edition we have the first of these by Stephen Kent on the HIV vaccines program grant. I hope this will not only be interesting for readers, but may inspire younger members and foster future collaborations. Perhaps including the photos will mean at least a few faces are familiar to first-timers at the ASI conference.

I look forward to receiving articles about your research group, or on any topic or suggestions on things you would like to see included in the newsletter, and I hope you will continue to support the newsletter with your contributions and stories.

Miles Davenport

HONORARY SECRETARY'S NEWS

1. Student Travel Award Recipients

ASI continues to strongly support its student membership. This year we have 19 ASI Student Awards, going to the following recipients, to attend the Annual Meeting in Adelaide:

Daniel Eichner	ACT	John Curtin School of Medical Research
Robert Wood	ACT	John Curtin School of Medical Research
Kim Good	NSW	Centenary Institute
Julie Wheway	NSW	Garvan Institute of Medical Research
Anthony Ryan	NSW	Centenary Institute
Katherine Jackson	NSW	University of New South Wales
Alberto Pinzon-Charry	QLD	Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Tammy Maxwell	QLD	Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Louise Randall	QLD	University of Queensland
Rachel Wilson	NZ	University of Otago
Misty Jenkins	VIC/TAS	Melbourne University
Edwin Hawkins	VIC/TAS	Walter and Elisa Hall
Karen Scalzo	VIC/TAS	Austin Research Institute
Ian Parish	VIC/TAS	Walter and Elisa Hall Institute
Fleur Tynan	VIC/TAS	Monash University
Karyn Lister	VIC/TAS	Monash University
Angela Chan	WA	Telethon Institute for Child Health Research
Paul Giacomini	SA/NT	University of Adelaide
Claire Jessup	SA/NT	Flinders Medical Centre

We look forward to seeing you in Adelaide and hearing your presentations!

2. Annual General Meeting

The ASI Annual General Meeting will be held at lunchtime on Tuesday 14 December. This is a good opportunity for the whole membership to be involved in the Society and to have your input. I therefore strongly encourage everyone at the Scientific Meeting to attend.

3. Immunology & Cell Biology Publication of the Year

As you may be aware from Chris Parish's Editors report published in the Newsletter earlier in the year, we have a new and improved version of the ICB Publication of the Year Award. Previous recipients of the ICB Publication of the Year award received Blackwell Publishing Asia books and journals to the value of \$800. With the new award the recipient will not only receive \$800 worth of BPA books and journals but an economy class return airfare to the USA or Europe to attend a major scientific meeting. The scholarship will begin in 2005 and will apply to papers published in ICB in 2004. The eligibility requirements are simple. You must be the first author on a Research Article/Brief Communication published in ICB and be a financial member of ASI in the year in which the paper is published.

Hope to see many of you in Adelaide.

*Cheers,
Geeta Chaudhri*

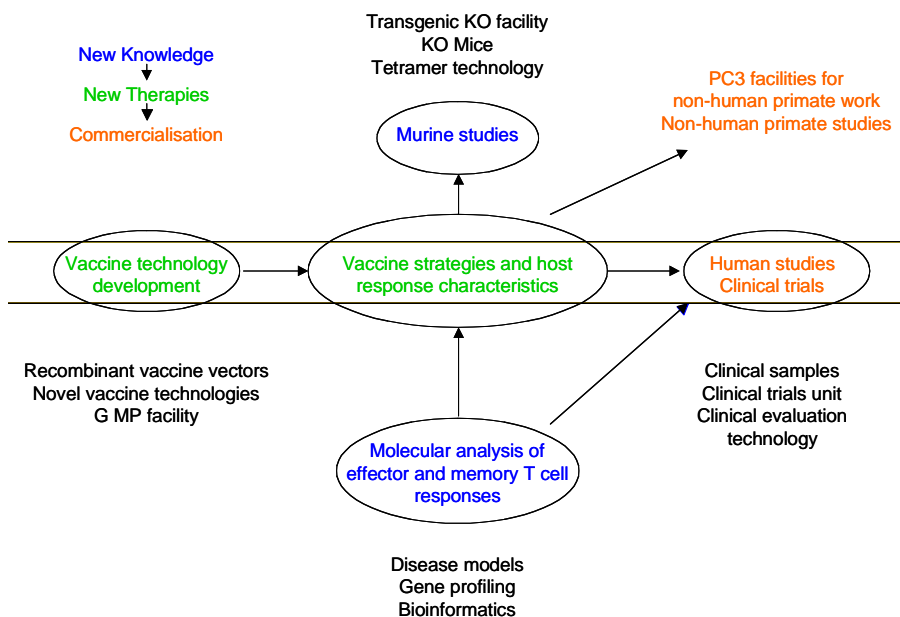
Making a vaccine for HIV, cont.

Vaccination. This program is aimed at:

- The induction of high avidity CD8+ T cell responses at systemic and mucosal sites.
 - Analysis of effector and memory T cell populations elicited to protracted virus infection and novel vaccine approaches in primates.
 - T cell responses and viral control in HIV infection.
- 2) The goal of these preclinical investigations is to assess new vaccine strategies, designed for viruses with a high level of genetic diversity such as HIV, for eventual evaluation in Phase I/II clinical trial. In particular;
- The Design and Development of Novel Strategies for Prophylactic Vaccination.
 - Development of new vaccine strategies to elicit neutralising antibody (NAb) to HIV-1 Env.
 - Development of immunotherapeutic vaccine strategies .
- 3) Clinical evaluation of promising vaccine candidates

The key innovative aspects of this program that will ensure long-term success and relevance are:

- Several new HIV vaccine techniques are being brought to this program. The use of immune-protected brain-derived HIV env sequences to induce neutralising antibodies is also highly innovative. Novel approaches can be evaluated through a suite of platform vaccine vectors.
- The pipeline of innovative developmental approaches in understanding protective viral immunity (eg. generation of high-avidity T cells and molecularly characterising memory T cells) will ensure a capacity to make further advances in novel vaccine design against chronic viral infections.
- The combination of complementary expertise within the team, from understanding immunity to chronic viral infections, the design of novel HIV vaccines, their evaluation in non-human primates all the way through to clinical trials is a highly advantageous aspect of this program.



Peter Doherty Lab, Microbiology & Immunology, Univ of Melbourne. (From left) Professor Stanley Perlman (on sabbatical), Dr Katherine Kedzierska (Postdoc), Ms Alice Denton (Student), Ms Bridie Day (Student), Ms Misty Jenkins (Student), Dr John Stambas (Postdoc), Dr Jing Pi (Postdoc), Dr Nicole La Gruta (Postdoc), Dr Stephen Turner (Postdoc), Laureate Professor Peter Doherty, Ms Dina Stockwell (Research Assistant)



Kelleher Lab (from left to right back): Kylie Butson, Tony Kelleher, Mee Ling Munier, Susanna Ip. (front): Palanee Ammaranond, Ciara McGinley, David van Bockel

This program is ideally suited to new students and post-docs who wish to gain a large breadth of experience in basic and applied immunobiology, focusing on HIV. Ready access to cutting-edge basic immunology research, non-human primate models, and human samples and clinical trial expertise ensures that promising research can be readily and rigorously evaluated across a platform of technologies.

Relevant publications

1. Appay, V., 2002. *J Immunol* 168:5954-8.
2. Dale, C. J., 2004. *Vaccine* In press.
3. Estcourt, M. J., 2002. *Int Immunol* 14:31-7.
4. Kelleher, A. D., 2001. *J Exp Med* 193:375-86.
5. Kent, S. J., 2001. *J Virol* 75:11930-4.

6. Kent, S. J., 1998. *J Virol* 72:10180-8.
7. Turner, S. J., 2003. *Immunity* 18:549-59.
8. Turner, S. J., 2004. *Semin Immunol* 16:179-84.
9. Turner, S. J., 2004. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 101:3545-50.
10. Zaunders, J. J., 2004. *Blood* 103:2238-47.

Other grants held

- NIH HIV Vaccine Design and development teams award
- NHMRC development grants
- NHMRC fellowship
- Burnet Fellowship
- Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology awards
- NIH innovation grant
- NIH early HIV infection award (AIEDRP)

Kent Lab, Microbiology and Immunology, University of Melbourne. (From left) Socheata Chea, Miranda Smith (below), Caroline Fernandez, Stephen Kent, Rob De Rose, Richard Sydenham, David O'Connor (visiting scientist), Jane Dale.



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12th International Congress of Immunology, Montreal 2004

ASI sponsored five postgraduate students / post-docs to attend the 12th International Congress of Immunology held in Montreal in July. A condition of this award was a written report of their experiences. Amanda de Mestre (John Curtin), Nicholas Wilson (WEHI), Tri Phan (Centenary Institute), and Patrick Reading (Micro and Immunol, Univ Melb) all submitted reports on their experiences, a combined version of which is outlined below:

“With a gathering of over 7000 immunologists, the 12th International Congress of Immunology (ICI) and 4th Annual Conference for the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies (FOCIS) was destined to be intense! The Opening Ceremony, held at the impressive “Palais des Congrès” in Montreal, was the Grammy Awards night of immunology, featuring government dignitaries and eminent representatives of the international scientific community. The sheer size of the main Congress hall meant the stage appeared as a mere dot in the distance. To overcome this, a series of projection screens were positioned to relay the speeches to the masses, contributing to the overall fanfare of the night.

The opening ceremony featured speeches from Philippa Marrack, the current president of the ICI and Emil Skamene, the Congress Chairman. Dr Skamene delivered a personal address on the importance of applying basic immunological research to clinical treatments. He illustrated this with the emotive example of using bone marrow transplantation to save the lives of people born with Primary Immunodeficiency (PI). This complex and rare condition is often undiagnosed and is best described as a systemic “melt-down” of immune responses. Following his speech, an award was presented to Viki Modell, co-founder of the Jeffrey Modell Foundation. The Modell family established the Foundation in honour of their son who died of hypogammaglobulinemia, a defect in immunoglobulin synthesis which is broadly classified as a PI. The Foundation supports patients, their families, physicians and researchers to further understand the nature of PI. The opening ceremony concluded with an impressive welcoming reception in the exhibition area; it was no trivial feat to feed and water that many jet-lagged scientists!

The scientific program for the Congress was a blend of basic immunology and its translation into clinical practice under the major themes (1) immune regulation, (2) immune intervention, (3) host resistance to

infection and malignancy, (4) immunodiagnosis and (5) immunogenetics. Importantly, links between academic research, technology transfer and the market development of new diagnostic procedures, drugs and services in immunology, were a feature of the Congress presentations.” (NW)

“... there were over 5,000 presentations including such diverse topics as asthma, stem cell and bone marrow transplantation, vaccines, arthritis and new therapies for HIV. The integration of the ICI and FOCIS programmes placed emphasis on the link between basic discoveries in immunology and their translation into clinical practice in the treatment of many chronic diseases. The overall motto of the Congress was ‘through science of immunology to improvement of health and to creation of new wealth in the knowledge-based economy’.” (PR)

“We all have a tendency to focus on one specific area of immunology, but there were no excuses for that at ICI. The conference showcased so many areas of work, allowing you to gain a wonderful perspective on the international immunological world. Without doubt, the greatest benefit of the week was to have the opportunity to hear so many prominent immunologists speak on a wide variety of topics.



Front row (left to right):

Tri Phan (Centenary Institute), Chris Parish (ASI President), Geeta Chaudri (ASI Hon. Sec.), Sue Heinzel (ASI SA/NT Councillor)

Back row (left to right):

Phil Hodgkin (Vice President), Patrick Reading (University of Melbourne), Amanda de Mestre (JCSMR), Yang Wang (JCSMR) (Not present for photo: Nick Wilson)

The week was very busy and I must say at times overwhelming. The days kicked off at 7.30am with 1000 posters on display. It was difficult to do justice to the posters on display and one quickly learnt a strategy for selecting posters of interest. The morning then had seven major symposia and the afternoon a choice of an amazing 25 concurrent minisymposia. The problem lay not in finding something of interest but rather choosing between the several topics of interests.

For 'trendy' research, the award was easily won by T regs. There appeared to be several concurrent sessions each day on these cells and their function. My favourite presentation of the week was from Mark Davis who showed images of calcium fluxing induced upon engagement of the TCR. Another highlight for me was the lecture by Professor Herzenberg, who was awarded the Novartis Special Immunology Prize. He told his story of the development of FACs technology, a technique young scientists all take for granted today." (MdM)

The generous sponsorship from ASI allowed the recipients both to attend the meeting itself as well as visit other (prospective post-doc) labs on the way. Hopefully this opportunity is one which will energise young immunologists and spur on future great work in Australian Immunology. The closing remarks from the four scholars:

"After five days at ICI, I left Montreal greatly inspired and with an enhanced thirst to learn. It also left me with a sense of how important it is to keep a broad, open and questioning mind. I would like to express my sincere thanks to ASI awarding me a travel award and which gave me the opportunity to have this wonderful experience." (MdM)

"The Congress was an amazing experience and I would like to thank the ASI for their generous travel award. Furthermore their contribution enabled me to use this opportunity to incorporate a post-doctoral tour to several laboratories in the US and Europe including Yale University, Harvard Medical School, the Rockefeller Institute and Cambridge University. This was an invaluable experience that has provided me with an excellent foundation to make an informed decision on where to make my move into the world of a post-doc. " (NW)

"Visiting the labs of Drs Cyster, Abbas and Locksley gave me a glimpse of the immense power they represented and I had to get back and warn the rest of the scientific world (or at least my bosses at Centenary). It was time to fly! But first I had to attend the Congress in Montreal. This was disappointing from a scientific point of view as it was too large and diffuse and there was no new data. Rather mutton was dressed up as lamb and everyone was congratulating everyone else on how beautiful the data was! I only wished I had membership to this secret society! The highlight of the conference though was catching up with people and talking science over a Belgian beer and mussels. If only the conference was held in a pub..." (TP)

"I have to say, it was quite an amazing experience to attend the ICI. Initially, the sheer number of sessions, the quality of the science and the opportunity to listen to colleagues (many of whom I had only ever seen in the bibliography of my thesis) was a little daunting. However, once I settled in and resisted the urge to continually dash between concurrent symposia I found the conference hugely satisfying. There were great opportunities to interact, swap ideas and form new collaborations in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Plan ahead for the 13th ICI to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 2007 – not one to miss!" (PR)

Report on the ASI Visiting Speaker Program

Professor Jean-Laurent Casanova from the Hôpital Necker Enfants Malades, Paris, France visited Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Wellington during September. Very positive feedback was received from his visit and from his interactions at the various branches.

Next year in August, we will have the visit of Dr Richard M Locksley from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Departments of Medicine and Microbiology/Immunology at the University of California San Francisco.

We would like to hear from candidates that any ASI member would like to propose, either to be invited exclusively for a ASI program or as part of other commitments they may have in Australia. For details on the Awards, please refer to the website.

A/Prof J. Alejandro Lopez

**Contributions
sought for the
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DID YOU KNOW?

The first official name for our society was the Australian Society of Immunologists. This was changed to the Australian Society of Immunology in 1972 and changed again to the Australian Society for Immunology in 1985. The final name change, so far, to Australasian Society for Immunology was made in 1992.

ASI Councillors' News

Queensland News

Once again, this year the **BIG (Brisbane Immunology Group)** annual retreat was a success. It took place at the Twin Water Resort, Noosa on August 19th–20th with the participation of 114 delegates. We would like to thank the various local institutions (CRC for Vaccine technology, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the Centre for Immunology and Cancer Research) who contributed generously to the funding of the meeting. This year we also had the financial support of various biotech companies as gold (Animal Resources Centre, Beckman Coulter, Beckton Dickinson Biosciences, Corbett Research, Mabtech and Sigma) and Silver (Biosciences, Mimotopes and Miltenyi Biotec) sponsors. They displayed their products and interacted with the delegates. We had two highly motivating International Speakers Peter Creswell and Jonathan Sprent (see pictures), as well as interstate speakers Tony Cunningham and Barbara Fazekas de St Groth. The BIG icon for this year went to Professor Denis Moss who delivered an inspiring historical perspective of his career and contribution to the field of EBV immunology. This year's Jonathan Sprent Orator was Professor Richard Smallwood, Chair of the National Blood Authority, who shared his experience as Commonwealth Chief Medical officer during the recent SARS epidemic.



Past Qld ASI councillor Graham Leggatt gets in the mood for cocktails to follow with Kate Green

We established the ASI-BIG Awards for oral and poster presentations, consisting of a cash prize and an annual membership to the ASI provided by the ASI-QLD branch; in addition, winners received a memorable book donated by the QIMR (Prof. Michael Good). The jury for the selection was composed by Peter Creswell, Jonathan Sprent and Judy Greer. The inaugural winners of these Awards were:

Oral presentation

Edward Morris (QIMR)

Donor treatment with Pegylated G-CSF augments the generation of IL-10 producing regulatory T cells and promotes transplant tolerance

Poster presentations

Sandro Prato (QIMR)

MHC class-I restricted exogenous presentation of a synthetic 102-mer malaria vaccine polypeptide

Judy Tellam (QIMR)

Endogenous presentation of CD8+ T cell epitopes from Epstein-Barr Virus encoded Nuclear Antigen 1



Peter Creswell excels in his didactic discussions by the pool

Following the various oral presentations, we successfully tested a discussion (and integration) model that examined each presentation both in their scientific content (suggesting ways to improve the work for publication) and their public relations potential. Amongst the outcome, we saw new TV producer Prof. Anne Kelso's crew broadcasting from the stage and a cunning series of newspaper headings reporting on the ASI-BIG Award winning presentation by Ed. Morris:

Courier Mail: "New Treatment Kills Cancer not Kids"

Horse and Hound: "Reining in the Killers/ Putting the Leash on Killers"

The Road Ahead: "Ed Can Change Tyres and Sick Kids Lives"

Cleo: "Playboy, Bachelor, Doctor and Sick Kids Hero"

Star Wars Weekly: "Ed Strikes Back"

Women's Day: "Giving Kids back to Their Families"

Financial Review: "Market Suspends Trading after Shock Medical Break-through (in mice)... Amgen Shares rocket"

Golf Digest: "Ed Takes a Swing at Cancer... And Hits an Eagle"

Complementing the integration of ideas and following the tradition, the evening smoothed on with various cocktails organised by Kate Green (see picture below left).

J. Alejandro Lopez
Councillor



Relaxed discussions with Jonathan Sprent in a tropical surrounding

A.C.T. News

ACT ASI members have enjoyed three outstanding seminars as part of the JCSMR seminar series from leading local Immunologists in recent months. These have included Warren Alexander who presented a talk entitled "New hematopoietic mutations through random mutagenesis in mice", Wallace Langdon on "The c-CblRING finger determines thymocyte fate by regulating TCR signalling thresholds" and Phil Stumbles on "Dendritic Cell Function and T Cell Differentiation in Response to Inhaled Allergens and Pathogens".

I would like to thank all the students who applied for the travel awards to the Adelaide conference this year. Congratulations to the ACT winners.

Finally I would like to introduce all ACT ASI members to Guna Karupiah who is taking over as ACT councillor in 2005.

Mark Hulett
Councillor



Guna Karupiah, ACT councillor from 2005

S.A./N.T. News

SA members have been treated with two exceptional seminars delivered by our international guests visiting Adelaide in September. First, Prof Jean-Laurent Casanova stopped in Adelaide during his tour through the country. We enjoyed his company over a dinner and he gave us some very interesting insights in the "The human model: a genetic dissection of immunity to infection in natural conditions." during his seminar.

To our delight, A/Prof Pete Sieling from UCLA accepted the invitation to come to Adelaide after the CD1 meeting on Heron Island. He gave us a fascinating talk on CD1 restricted T cell activation in mycobacterial infection. Many thanks to the School of Molecular and Biomedical Science, University of Adelaide who generously co-sponsored Pete's travel, for making this outstanding visit possible.

On upcoming events, we have the annual student meeting in mid November. Honours and PhD students are encouraged to present aspects of their work and the best presentation will be rewarded with a book voucher (generously donated by Unibooks), a cash prize and ASI membership for the following year. The runner up will also receive ASI membership. Over the last years the quality of the talks was exceptional and we are looking forward to another evening of excellent presentations.

Many of the active local members are in firm grip of organising the annual scientific meeting in December. The organising committee has been very busy collecting and sorting the abstracts, finalising the program and the abstract book and putting the finishing touches to the overall event. The FIMSA/ASI training course in the week before the main meeting, the Tumour Immunology Workshop and the HLDA8/ASI34 conference all have been able to attract a list of speakers of outstanding quality and we are confident to have put together an exciting program.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone in Adelaide in December.

Susanne Heinzl
Councillor

N.S.W. News

This has been an active and busy year for the NSW branch. We have been delighted to welcome two international visiting speakers, Dr Dave Serreze from Jackson Labs, Bar Harbor, USA and Professor Jean-Laurent Casanova from the Necker Institute, Paris. We have sponsored a popular series of workshops (lubricated by wine and junk food) to discuss broader issues in biological science. Topics included 'The nature of evidence' directed by Nick King, 'Who wants to be a millionaire?', by Chris Jolly, 'Evolution & the immune system: diverse routes to a common objective' by Bob Raison and 'CSI: Criminal Scientific Investigations' by Adrian Grech. Our final host, Tony Basten, has invited suggestions for the '10 scientific discoveries that changed the world'. This promises to be exciting if not controversial.

We renewed our acquaintance with The Retreat at Wiseman's Ferry for our branch meeting. As in 2003, this was an excellent meeting, and this year attendance was much improved: 55 delegates from a number of institutions across NSW presented their work in progress. We



At the Pool Table: Honours students Marcus Hayward and Korana Musicki

Pablo Sylveira & Bernadette Saunders playing darts



heard very interesting formal talks and had most useful informal discussions with our two guest speakers, Dr Carola Vinuesa (ANU) and Prof Charles Mackay (Garvan). Thanks to both of them. Pre-dinner recreation included golf, volleyball or a walk up the Old Northern Road. We enjoyed the fine food and wine supplied by the establishment at dinner. Sadly, post dinner karaoke was 'off' but we entertained ourselves instead with table tennis, pool and darts (as shown). I would like to thank the support team who made this meeting possible: Kris Maddock who liaised with the venue, and Scott Byrne (good luck in Houston) and Alex Spencer who sorted the computers, Jamie Triccas who sorted the scientific program, treasurer (Chris Jolly) who paid the bills and Invitrogen for their sponsorship.



Carola Vinuesa & Stuart Tangye in post-dinner conversation



Bernadette Saunders, Fabienne Mackay (mostly hidden behind Bernie), Charles Mackay and Shane Grey: learning how the convicts constructed the old highway north from Sydney to Newcastle

The standard of the applications for bursaries to support travel to the Adelaide meeting was excellent: the judges wished all could be supported. However a choice had to be made and congratulations are offered to the successful applicants.

*Helen Briscoe
Councillor*



Right & Below:
Delegates at dinner



New Zealand News

This issue we have a contribution from Joanna Kirman in Wellington who is reporting on the visit of our ASI visiting speaker, Prof Casanova; take it away Jo!

“Professor Casanova arrived in Wellington at the end of his intensive trip around Australia. Although during his visit to Wellington it was unusually (!!) windy and cold, Prof Casanova was treated to a spectacular view of Wellington from the wind turbine at the top of Brooklyn hill one sunny afternoon. Jean-Laurent had a chance to meet with a large number of immunologists and clinicians from all over NZ – from the University of Otago, Dunedin; AgResearch Wallaceville; Wellington School of Medicine; Victoria University of Wellington and the Malaghan Institute. His seminar presentation on Friday was extremely well received, and gave the mostly animal-based immunologists in the audience a chance to consider the human ‘model’. Prof Casanova’s visit was a great success and has already initiated some collaborations. Thanks to the ASI for sponsoring his visit to NZ, and to Prof Casanova for maintaining a high level of enthusiasm at the end of such an exhausting trip.”

Now for Dunedin news. In September we had a visit from an Otago graduate, Dr Richard Webby. Richard is now based at St Jude Hospital where he is working at the cutting edge of influenza research. He gave an excellent talk updating us on the Asian Bird ‘flu problem and it was great to see that international success hasn’t changed him! I would also like to congratulate Dr Margaret Baird on her promotion to Associate Professor. So that is it for this month and that is all from me as I have served my two year sentence as NZ Councillor. All joking aside, it has been a great experience and good luck to the new Councillor (you’ll need it – we have a conference to organise in 2006!).

*Sarah Hook
Councillor*

Victorian News

Annual IgV Scientific Meeting

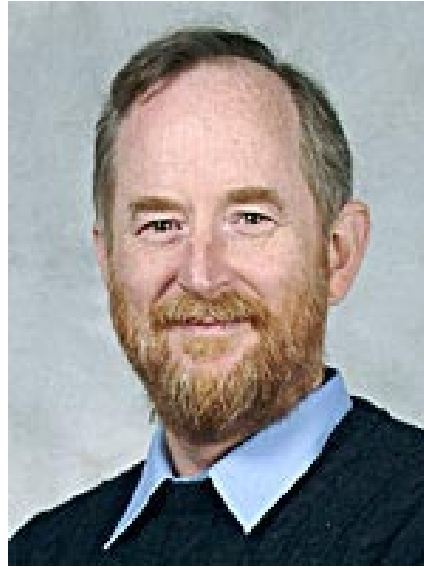
Recently, the Victorian/Tasmanian branch of ASI held its annual scientific meeting in Beechworth, Victoria. Over three days, from October 10-12, approximately 70 people enjoyed the scientific and social interactions in the beautiful gold town surroundings. It was especially pleasing to see that almost half the registrants were students, which is a great endorsement in getting the younger members of the Society involved. We were also pleased to welcome a number of Canberra ASI members who made the meeting even better. Our special thanks go to the invited speakers and their contribution to the program, which this year was "Infection and Autoimmunity". Our interstate keynote speaker was Alan Baxter, from the Comparative Genomics Centre, James Cook University. Alan gave us a comprehensive overview of how genetic and environmental factors can interact and influence disease features. Our other invited speakers included, Rosemary Ffrench (Burnet Institute), Richard Ferrero (Monash University), Ian Wicks (WEHI), Nadine Dudek (St Vincent's Institute), Mark Wright (The Austin Research Institute), Andrew Bean (CSIRO Livestock Industries), Scott Thomas (John Curtin School of Medical Research), Rob Center (University of Melbourne), Odidila Wijburg (University of Melbourne) and Paul Gleeson (University of Melbourne). We would also like to thank our sponsors for the meeting; CSL Limited, Mimotopes and the CRC for Vaccine Technology.



The Immunology Group of Victoria

A branch of the Australasian Society for Immunology

Farewell to Grant Morahan



It was fitting that the 2004 annual IgV scientific meeting was used to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of the founding Chairman of IgV; Grant Morahan (WEHI). IgV was formed in 1992 and it has been largely through the efforts of Grant and his committee that has resulted in the Victorian branch of ASI becoming one of the most successful branches in Australasia. In honour of his contribution to IgV, the keynote address which opens our annual meeting will now be known as The Morahan Lecture. Grant is moving to Perth in the new-year to continue his research and on behalf of the IgV committee and all members, we wish Grant and family every success in this new adventure.

ASI Travel Bursaries

The local IgV committee would like to congratulate the Victorian students who were awarded ASI travel bursaries to attend the annual meeting in Adelaide.

*Frank Alderuccio
Councillor*

Sustaining Membership

ASI Inc acknowledges the support of the following sustaining members:

- Jomar Diagnostics
- Dynal Biotech Pty Ltd

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An invitation and a request to all ASI members

to contribute copy that they think might be interesting, useful, historical, humorous or thought provoking.

- We invite our student membership to voice their views on issues that interest or directly concern them.
- It's our newsletter, so let's support it and strive to make it even better.
- The ASI newsletter comes out 4 times a year and we welcome your contributions.
- **AND NOW YOU COULD WIN \$100 FOR THE BEST ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER!**

And the winner is ...

At the 2003 Council meeting the somewhat desperate Newsletter Editor suggested a prize for the best article published over a 12 month period. The prize was to encourage unsolicited submissions and help circulate good stories or clever insights associated with Immunology and our Society. Whether or not the prize played a role, it was a bumper year for articles. Close runners up for the prize were the popular description of new protein names by Andrea McAdam and the comparison of Olympic and scientific achievements from Miles Davenport.



Prof. Gordon Ada
(Photo courtesy Multimedia, JCSMR, ANU)

But for combination of quality and quantity we couldn't go past the extraordinary efforts of Professor Gordon Ada. To volunteer three original articles in a six month period was unprecedented; the fact that all three were outstandingly interesting and included lessons on life and science for all our members was a tremendous bonus. So Gordon earns the inaugural award for best Newsletter contribution. Congratulations Gordon.

To help jog the memory here's a reminder of the three articles.

How to win a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (February issue)

This article summarised a speech Gordon delivered in honour of the retirement of Bob Blanden from the JCSMR. The theme of the article is the rather incredible series of seemingly random events that conspired to put Doherty and Zinkernagel in the right place in the right environment to carry out their ground-breaking

research on MHC restriction. Gordon himself had a hand in this of course, as the Departmental head at the time. Highlights of the story were that Peter Doherty came to Canberra to work as a Postdoc with Cedric Mims. When Mims left almost immediately to return to the UK Gordon promoted Peter to head his own laboratory. Thus, element one was in place. Getting Zinkernagel was more convoluted. Apparently Rolf applied for a PhD scholarship at the ANU but was unsuccessful. By chance a year or two later Gordon sat on a WHO committee for research on cancer in Lyon. Another member of the same committee was Henri Isliker who happened to be Rolf's boss. He told Gordon that Rolf was still keen to go to Australia setting in train a plan between both of them to find the necessary money get him started. Thus, element two was in place. The subsequent convergence of key events including Bob Blanden's development of CTL assays for virus detection is woven together to illustrate the conclusion "that young scientists can make very important scientific discoveries".

The Milk of Human Kindness: How my wife helped me crystallise Neuraminidase (June)

This story certainly has a surprise. Gordon's brilliant and amusing decision to use human breast milk to induce neuraminidase expression by V. cholerae led to him becoming the world supplier of the enzyme and the eventual crystallization of the protein. Here the punchline is delivered by Jim Goding who solicited the article from Gordon. Mirroring the response of an NHMRC committee he offered the following assessment:

"No rationale
Not hypothesis driven
Crazy idea
Fishing expedition
A stab in the dark?
A really long shot".

What does it take to be a great scientist (June)

Here Gordon relates an encounter with Albert Sabin late in Sabin's career. Gordon was brave enough to counter Sabin in print in *Nature*. Gordon was contacted again by *Nature* on the day Sabin died in 1993 to say they had a response from Sabin and would he like to reply again? Appropriately Gordon decided to let Sabin rest. However, the moral of the story is that a key to success in science is to defend your ideas against all comers. This habit of a lifetime had served Albert Sabin well.

Phil Hodgkin