

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

# DOUBLE HELIX



## Notes from the (Rocking) Chair

Volume 2 Issue 2

August 2007

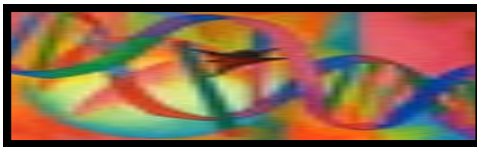
**T**he Department of Biology has seen an 80% increase in total number of majors since its 2001 departmental review. The increase in number of students, number of faculty, undergraduate research, community service, and number of student organizations has provided a spark of interest that we feel is worthy of attention. The Department, and Hitch Science building as a whole, is bulging at the seams with student-faculty interactions, intellectual growth, and dedication to meeting the needs of people, in the short term and over the long term. We invite alumni to be a part of this effort by telling us your stories, speaking to student groups on campus, assisting students with internships, and making us aware of career possibilities that you have discovered over the years. We look forward to hearing from our readers! - Dr. Grammer

## Congratulations to the CAS Student Award Winners in Biology!



From Left to right:

Elizabeth Schriener, Freshman Achievement Award in Biology; Robbie Gibson, Ronald M. Barrett Prehealth Award; Dr. Ronald Barrett, professor emeritus; Dr. David Hill, professor emeritus; Adam Militana, Outstanding Student in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; Stacey Apple, Outstanding Student in Biology; Rebecca Repasky, Donald R. Ramage Award for Service to the Learning Community in Biology; Dr. Donald Ramage, professor emeritus.



## **New Faculty Member Joins Department of Biology, Fall 2007**

The Department of Biology is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. John Niedzwiecki as Assistant Professor of Biology beginning in August 2007. Dr. Niedzwiecki's expertise lies in the study of population genetics, particularly of vertebrates. His research spans the distance from field biology, where he studies and collects samples from salamander populations, to the lab, where he investigates DNA markers as indicators of population genetics. He also performs lab studies of animal behavior. Dr. Niedzwiecki's degrees are a B. S. from Shippensburg University and a Ph.D. from University of Kentucky. He is currently completing post-doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati. The Department is very pleased to have a person of Dr. Niedzwiecki's caliber and training as part of the faculty, and we look forward to his contributions as they broaden the teaching and undergraduate research programs it offers.

## **Department of Biology Faculty Activities in 2006-2007**

During the summer of 2006 Dr. Steve Murphree led the four sessions of "Bugs, Beetles, and Butterflies" for area children, grades 1-6.

In October 2006 Drs. Lori McGrew and Bob Grammer attended the Annual Meeting of the Society for Neuroscience in Atlanta, GA.

At the Tennessee Academy of Science Annual Meeting at Austin Peay University, November 2006, Dr. Jennifer Thomas made a presentation entitled "Teaching Undergraduates How to Read Scientific Articles: A Step-wise Approach". At the same meeting Dr. Darlene Panvini presented a talk on "Service Learning in Undergraduate Biology Courses". Drs. Ragsdale, Murphree and Grammer also attended this meeting.

During the 2006-2007 year Dr. Murphree continued to serve as Treasurer of the Tennessee Academy of Science.

In March 2007 Dr. Panvini along with Dr. Henry Spratt of UT Chattanooga served as an external reviewer for the Environmental Studies program at Berry College in GA.

During 2006-2007 Drs. Nick Ragsdale and Bob Grammer served as members of the School of Pharmacy Study team and the Search Committee for the Dean of the School of Pharmacy.

In March 2007 Dr. Panvini served as local arrangements chair and presented as Belmont hosted the Sustainability in Higher Education conference. This conference brings together colleges and universities across the state of Tennessee to discuss issues of environmental sustainability in the higher education arena.

On April 13, 2007 Dr. Panvini hosted "Explorations in Environmental Sciences", a workshop for local high school students. The topic was "Smuggled! An Environmental CSI".



## Department of Biology Students Win Academic Honors in 2006-2007



**Katie Dillon was the recipient of the David R. Hill Award for Environmental Service**

Biology and BMB Majors received a variety of awards and honors throughout the 2006-2007 academic year. During the summer of 2006 Stacey Apple won the Biology Department Scholarship presented to the student whose Summer Scholars work was judged by participating faculty to be the best by virtue of student effort and quality of research. During the Spring 2007 Belmont Connections Week the following Biology and BMB students were inducted into Alpha

Chi, the University's highest academic organizational honor: Chris Bowman, Sarah Brandt, Melissa Draper, Michelle Engberg, Jill Neblett, Doris Ortez, Rebecca Repasky and Mollie Schlarman.



**Alpha Chi inductees for Spring 2007**

At the Spring 2007 College of Arts and Sciences Awards Day, Beth Schriener received the Freshman Award for Outstanding Achievement in Biology. Robbie Gibson was awarded the Ronald M. Barrett Pre-Health Award for Academic Excellence and Clinical Experience. Becky Repasky won the Donald R. Ramage Award for contributions to the Learning Community in Biology. Katie Dillon was announced as the winner of the David R. Hill Award for Environmental Service. Stacey Apple received the award for Outstanding Student in Biology, given to a graduating senior. Adam Militana was named the Outstanding Student in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, a graduating senior award based on academic excellence.



**Dr. Donald Ramage with Elizabeth Repasky**



**Dr. Ronald Barrett with Robbie Gibson**

At the CAS Awards Day Dr. Ron Barrett, Professor Emeritus of Biology (see right), who taught pre-health related courses and served as pre-health advisor for 30 years in the Department of Biology was in attendance. Likewise present was Dr. Don Ramage (see left), Professor Emeritus of Biology and former Dean of the School of Sciences. The students were also honored by the presence of Dr. David Hill, Professor Emeritus of Biology and long-time Chair of the Department of Biology (see page one).

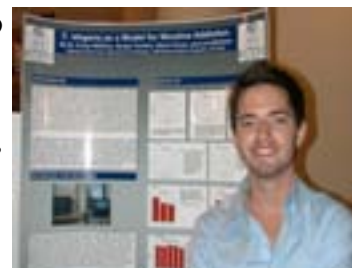
At Scholarship Day Freshman Beth Schriener received the Hale Leadership Award. This award recognizes an outstanding first-year student who has made significant contributions in leadership, service, and scholarship to the Belmont Community. This is a university wide honor. At the Spring 2007 Commencement Adam Militana received the Robert E. Watson Scholarship Award which goes to the graduate who has the highest scholastic record.





## Student Achievements in Undergraduate Research

At the Spring Tennessee Academy of Science Middle TN Collegiate Division two Belmont students presented their senior project results. Corey Winfree (right) presented “*C. elegans* as a Model for Nicotine Addiction” And Michelle Engberg, an Honors Program student with a self-designed major in Exercise Biology, explained her Honors Thesis, “Correlation Between Estrogen Levels and Knee Injuries in Female Athletes”. Michelle tied for the winner of Best Student Paper at this session. In the Fall 2006 TAS meeting fellow student Kristen Sorensen likewise tied for Best Undergraduate Student Presentation with her presentation on “*C. elegans* as a Model System for *Streptococcus pneumoniae* Infection”. Dr. Panvini’s students, Neely Osteen, Amanda Simpson and Rejana Wells also presented posters.



At the Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium on April 25, 2007, ten Biology students, one exercise biology student, and two Biochemistry and Molecular Biology students orally presented their senior projects. The projects ranged from motion in *C.elegans* to palate development in mice to water pollution in Mill Creek near the Nashville International Airport. Over the four hours of presentations audiences of 12 to 40 students, faculty, friends, and family enjoyed hearing the fruits of many hours of labor and preparation.

## Department of Biology Teams Offers New Interdisciplinary Majors

In recognition of the fact that many of society’s problems require teamwork from different disciplines and that new scientific approaches are evolving to address those problems, the Department of Biology has become involved in three new interdisciplinary majors. The Biochemistry and Molecular Biology major, offered jointly with the Department of Chemistry and Physics, began in the fall of 2002. Drs. Kim Boggs and Bob Grammer developed the major which contains 28 hours of chemistry and 27 hours of biology. The program is coordinated by Dr. Jennifer Thomas, has its own student organization, Beta Chi ( $\beta X$ ), and has already graduated five majors. The Environmental Studies major, begun in Fall 2004, has two track options for specialization, policy and science. Dr. Darlene Panvini coordinates the program, which is broadly interdisciplinary and has its own student organization, O.N.E. (Our Natural Environment). The newest interdisciplinary program involving biology is the major in Neuroscience (started Fall 2006). A joint venture between computer science, psychology, and biology, this major is part of a larger program, ICoRD (Institute for Computing Related Disciplines). The Neuroscience major includes options for students to specialize further in psychology, computer science, or biology, if desired. This program is coordinated by Dr. Lonnie Yandell (psychology), and like all the programs mentioned requires no minor and includes a research track. These programs provide excellent preparation for students to enter those fields directly or go on to further study in graduate or professional schools. The Department looks forward to growth in all these majors.



# Activities and Events in Biology 2006-2007



*Dr. Joan Maloof speaks about environmental issues in a February 2007 Convo*



*BIO 1120 Students at Radnor Lake*



*SURS, November 2006*



*BIO 1120 students at Couchville Cedar Glade*



*Tri Beta Plant sale in October 2006*



# Activities and Events in Biology 2006-2007



*CAS Awards Ceremony in April 2007*



*Environmental Sustainability conference, Belmont goes green*



*BIO 1120 students studying aquatic insects at Little Harpeth River*



*Composting in ENV 1110*



*Dr. Panvini shows how to compost for ENV 1110*



## Students Graduate with Majors in Biology and BMB

During the 2006-2007 academic year 12 students graduated with majors in biology, two with biochemistry and molecular biology as a major, and one graduated with a self-designed major in exercise biology. Of the six students who applied to medical school, all were accepted. One graduate matriculates at Belmont's School of Physical Therapy this fall, and one will begin dental school. Two graduates received positions as pharmaceutical representatives upon graduation. The Department is pleased with the success of all these graduates and wishes them well in the future.

## Alumni News

We have heard from these alumni, and we would love to hear from you. This newsletter is being sent by e-mail to all alumni for whom we have e-mail addresses. Please update us with any information on your activities, whether work or family.

- Deanna Gardenhire (in photo), 2006 BMB graduate, is a second-year medical student at University of Tennessee, Memphis. While completing her first year of medical school at the University of Tennessee, Memphis, Deanna was able to participate on the leadership team of the Christian Medical and Dental Association as well as examine patients on a mission trip to El Salvador."
- Denny Harris, (1969), is currently teaching adjunct for the Department in the general education course, BIO 1010.
- Kristal Wicks (2006) has been accepted to Franklin Pierce Law Center in New Hampshire. This program has an intellectual property program and many students with science and engineering students.
- Katie Nicholson Pettit (2003) is entering her fourth year of medical school at Univ. of South Alabama. She has decided on a combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics residency, while husband Ryan has chosen Obstetrics and Gynecology.
- Scott Russell(2005) has started a new position with Eli Lilly in Indiana working on model development and cancer drug discovery.
- Amanda Stinnett (2006) has begun a position as a research assistant at Vanderbilt University in a lab studying the relationship between diabetes and angiogenesis.
- Jenny Pollard(2006) has begun work as marketing coordinator and office manager for Marshall Development in the Nashville area.
- Carrie Johnson (2005) will be married in September.
- Mike Modlin (2006) will begin dental school Fall 2007 in North Carolina.





## BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

*Dr. Robert T. Grammer, Professor and Chair*  
*Dr. C. Steven Murphree, Professor and Gulf Coast Research Lab Coordinator*  
*Dr. Lori L. McGrew, Assistant Professor and ICORD Fellow*  
*Dr. John Niedzwiecki, Assistant Professor*  
*Dr. Darlene Panvini, Associate Professor and ENV Coordinator*  
*Dr. D. Nicholas Ragsdale, Associate Professor and Pre-Health Advisor*  
*Dr. Jennifer T. Thomas, Associate Professor and BMB Coordinator*  
*Ms. Terri Templeman, Administrative Assistant*  
*Mr. Ray Seely, Laboratory Manager and Chemical Hygiene Officer*

## Contact Us

- Have any comments about the newsletter or the Department?
- An alum with an update on activities?
- Like further information about the Department, its offerings or activities?

Please contact us by one of the following e-mail address or by postal service.

Ms. Terri Templeman, Administrative Assistant, [templemant@mail.belmont.edu](mailto:templemant@mail.belmont.edu)

Dr. Robert Grammer, Chair, [grammerr@mail.belmont.edu](mailto:grammerr@mail.belmont.edu)

Department of Biology  
 Belmont University  
 1900 Belmont Blvd.  
 Nashville, TN 37212

Also, please check the Departmental webpage at: [www.belmont.edu/biology](http://www.belmont.edu/biology)

## Belmont Alumni

We want to hear from you! Please take a moment to fill out the information below and send to us.

Alumni Update

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Recent promotion, honor, award, family activity? \_\_\_\_\_