

THE HUB

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Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research

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Just A Reminder...

The up-to-date BTI staff directory is always available online at <http://bti.cornell.edu/page.php?id=125> (or go to the BTI Home page and click the People link in the upper right corner).

Note that you can search for someone by first and/or last name (or a part of their name), by job type, or by lab/work group. You can also generate a list of all staff formatted for printing.

The online directory has replaced the "phone list" that used to be emailed out and/or posted monthly.

Any corrections or changes should be directed to Brian Gollands at BEG1.

Ice Cream Social!

The annual BTI Ice Cream Social, sponsored by the Fun Committee, is scheduled for Wednesday, August 31st at 3:00pm in the BTI Atrium.



Come down for ice cream sundaes with all the fixin's and toppin's your hearts desire!

Grilled on the Hot Seat...

An Interview with David Stern

BTI'ers will soon be sipping fresh-ground, fair trade Starbucks coffee for free. Is this a blatant ploy by the management to build their popularity, or is there more to it? Shawna Williams investigates.

SW: Why are we switching to fair trade coffee?

DS: Since the other option is "unfair" trade, it was an easy call. I've been after it for a while.

SW: What exactly is fair trade coffee?

DS: Most coffee is purchased through middlemen, who retain nearly all the profit from the sale. The coffee farmers get very little, miring them in poverty. Fair trade coffee is purchased without a middleman, and guarantees a minimum price per pound paid directly to the farmer. It is also grown on small farms, and at least in some cases, under the rainforest canopy and without pesticides. Starbucks uses an independent certifier of its practices, a nonprofit called TransFair USA. You can see the Starbucks propaganda sheet at <http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/StarbucksAndFairTrade.pdf>.

SW: Is there any guarantee that fair trade coffee won't be undrinkable sludge, like the exploitation coffee we used to have?

DS: Of course not! But given that it is grown with more love, how can it be worse?

SW: Are you worried that the unearned luxury of good coffee might foster a mentality that impedes productivity? As Pink Floyd so eloquently put it, how can you have any pudding if you haven't eaten your meat?

DS: I've called Pink Floyd a lot of things, but "eloquent" wasn't one of them. However, they were transformational, which is basically what we are aiming for with our coffee switch. And why do you think good coffee is "unearned?"

SW: Did the fact that the second-floor coffee pots always seem to be empty play into your decision?

DS: We couldn't get reasonably priced free trade coffee for the existing machine, and I also felt that the amount of packaging was excessive and could be reduced with a different kind of apparatus. The fact that the pots quickly emptied told me what I already knew: Coffee is not a luxury—it is a necessity!

SW: How much will this cost the Institute?

DS: Time will tell. There will be less waste with this machine, since it only makes coffee as each cup is demanded. And with stronger coffee, people may drink fewer cups. On the other hand, the price per pound is a bit higher, as we are paying a 25% premium for fair trade, but the dollars go into the right pockets. Certainly, we would ask that the machine be used only by BTI staff and others working in the laboratories.

I would add that personally, I see "miniature" forms of environmentalism like these not simply in terms of dollars and cents. It's the right thing to do. By the time you read this, we will be test-driving disposable plates, cups and forks made from corn or sugar cane. We already switched to recycled paper, and management is required to print two-sided whenever possible. I have asked that the Institute no longer use any Styrofoam plates or cups. I think most of us would agree that the additive effects of small behavioral changes really add up. I hope BTI'ers will give me any ideas they have for further initiatives!

Congratulations, BTI Bombers!

1st Place Winners

Cornell Intramural Recreational League

See story on page 4

Free Trial of Generic Medications

Excelsus BlueCross BlueShield is offering a First Line Rx Generic Trial program which gives members approximately a 2-week trial prescription for selected generic medications at NO COST. This program helps members save up to \$200 per year in out-of-pocket prescription costs when they continue with a generic medication. Experience has shown that more than 90% of all patients who start on a generic medication will stay with it – and on average, generics are 1/4 of the price of brand alternatives.

Medications Included in the Trial Program:

Commonly Used For:	Generic Medication	Equivalent Brand	Other Brands
Depression	fluoxetine, citalopram	Prozac, Celexa	Zoloft, Paxil
Heartburn	prilosec OTC	Prilosec	Aciphex, Nexium
High Blood Pressure	atenolol, hydrochlorothiazide	Tenormin, Hydrodiuril	Inderal LA, Corgard, Atacand, Norvasc, Accupril, Altace
High Cholesterol	lovastatin	Mevacor	Lipitor, Pravachol, Zoror, Lescol
Incontinence	oxybutynin	Ditropan	Detrol LA, Oxytrol, Sanctura

How does the First Line Rx Generic Trial Program Work?

- The first time a member is prescribed one of the generic medications listed above, ask the doctor for a prescription for a trial quantity of 16 pills (14 for Prilosec OTC). The doctor needs to provide a second prescription for a full supply (with refills) along with the trial prescription.
- When the trial prescription is filled at any FLRx participating pharmacy, the co-payment will be waived.
- The cost of all future prescriptions for the medication will be at the usual member co-payment.
- Only 1 trial prescription per medication is permitted.

Management UpD8!!

In between vacations and conferences, the management team has kept busy, although not cool, during July and August. Here are some of the highlights:

- Larry Russell has been working hard to get the auditorium project completed by the end of August. This project has been extremely challenging, but the end is near.
- John Dentes, Lucy Pola and Ezra Cornell met with BTI's new attorneys to give them a history of the Institute and bring them up to date on by-laws, benefit plans and other Institute business.
- The Information Resource Center continues its transition. After selling some of the library's books, IT staff have been packing up old journals to be sent to Vietnam. As soon as this part of the project is complete we can begin looking at the layout of this area and make it more comfortable for folks to work in.
- On the public affairs front, Shawna is planning a photo slideshow event, "A Closer Look at BTI", on Wednesday, September 7th. This event will feature a slideshow and live music in the auditorium, activities in the new Kohut Teaching Lab, and a greenhouse tour and talk. Also be on the lookout for information on the Science Café's first event, September 20th.
- David Stern and Peter Moffett have been sifting through cv's for the faculty search. A few potential candidates have popped up, but we are still in the beginning stages of the search.
- David Stern, Larry Russell and Brian Bell have been working with a variety of Cornell offices on the new USDA parking lot behind BTI. We are currently working on blocking headlights that will shine into the greenhouses at night.
- John Dentes has been working with our insurance broker to purchase Business Travel Accident Insurance for BTI employees. The policy will insure eligible employees during any business related travel by air and/or other carriers. More details will be available at a later date.
- Energy – June and July were hot months...energy consumption was twice as high as projected. That's the bad news. The good news is that because of all the energy conservation efforts undertaken, our costs are significantly lower than they would have been in previous years.

Outreach Updates!

by Nicole Markelz

Career Explorations

During the last week of June, the Educational Outreach Committee hosted 11 4-H students from around NYS for the annual Career Explorations event. During their three days at the Institute, the students learned about plant-aphid and plant-pathogen interactions, tissue culture, molecular biology, maize biodiversity, and water-use efficiency. Thank you to the members of the EOC (Carina Barth, Shawna Williams, Paul King, Brian Gollands, Denise Costich, and Joyce Van Eck) for volunteering their time and effort to put together such great activities.

Teacher Training and Curriculum Development Workshop

In July, eight high school teachers from around New York State visited the Institute for 4 days to update their knowledge of plant science through tours of the facility, presentations by BTI and Cornell scientists, and laboratory activities. While they were here, they identified topics of interest and began collaborations with researchers to develop activities that they will take back with them to their classrooms. Thank you to the volunteers: Tom Brutnell, Joyce Van Eck, Paul King, Brian Gollands, and Sarah Covshoff.

Internship

After a full summer of research, our undergraduate and high school interns participated in the annual Summer Student Symposium on August 4th. Twelve undergraduate students gave talks, while seventeen undergraduate and high school interns prepared poster presentations. As determined by our wonderful judges (Carl Leopold, Dick Staples, Denise Costich, Haiyang Wang, Brian Gollands, and Shawna Williams), Leah Elliott from the Hanson lab, won the "Colonel's Cup" and Jen Brady from the Martin lab won the PGRP Poster Award. Congratulations to the winning students and labs and thank you to all the scientists and staff for doing such a good job mentoring the interns all summer!

BTI will be a little quieter place after August 12th, when the summer interns depart for their home institutions. I, for one, will be sad to see them go since they brought such energy and enthusiasm to the building. Good luck to them all!

Arrivals & Departures

Welcome to **David MacDonald**, the newest member of the unstoppable BTI Mechanical Team. Dave has been at Cornell for many years - the last 6 of which were as the Foreman of Cornell's Mechanical Department. He's already hard at work, roaming the hallways and greenhouses on his appointed rounds. Welcome, Dave!

Nicole Pence will be departing at the end of the month from Leon Kochian's lab to start law school here at Cornell this year. She is looking forward to studying law but will still be sighted at plant science seminars trying to keep up with current science because she would like to be a patent lawyer in plant biotechnology. Good luck to you, Nicole!

Mark D'Ascenzo recently departed BTI to start Grad School in the Dept. of Biomedical Engineering at Cornell. He has started in his new lab with Kelvin Lee and is currently deciding on a project, but will likely be working in collaboration with the Weill Medical School to study Alzheimer's disease using proteomic and bioinformatic methods. His campus address is 265 Olin Hall, Dept. of Biomedical Engineering. He likes being on the other end of campus because it's much more scenic and because of the dramatic increase in lunch options within a 2-5 minute walk.

Nai Chun Lin accepted a position as Assistant Professor at National Taiwan University and **April Melvin** has left us to join Cornell's Ph.D. Program in Ecology.

Although I don't have any details, several others have left BTI in the last few weeks as well. Farewell to **Larry Willard**, **Carina Barth**, **Ryan Gutierrez**, **Jay Jacobson**, **Dhirendra Kumar**, and **Jake Mace**. Best of luck to everyone!

Talks & Travels

Carl Leopold gave a talk on the Land Ethic to the Association for Preservation of the Adirondacks in Schenectady on June 27th and led a workshop the next morning.

BTI History

After a year and a half of intense effort and extensive writing, **Len Weinstein** and **Dick Staples** have completed a first-hand account of the Boyce Thompson Institute covering BTI's Ithaca years. This retrospective covers the move to Cornell and the people who contributed to the cooperative effort between Cornell and BTI. The retrospective also contains extensive information on some of the breakthrough scientific efforts made by our staff during the Ithaca years.

The "History" entitled: "Personal Views of The Boyce Thompson Institute - 1974 to 2000" is available in PDF format. If you are interested in an electronic copy, please contact Liz Estabrook (ee54/4-1217).

Len and Dick, thank you for the immense amount of time and effort you put into this.

July & August Service Anniversaries

Paul King	24 yrs
Brian Bell	18 yrs
Bridget Randall	5 yrs
Kay Blake	4 yrs
Haiyang Wang	3 yrs
Xuemei Tang	3 yrs
Nicole Markelz	2 yrs
Peter Moffett	2 yrs
Steve Mosher	2 yrs
Liz Estabrook	1 yr
Jeon Hong	1 yr
Prasit Deewatthanawong	1 yr

Monday Morning Seminar Series Winners:

Joyce Van Eck - 1st Place

Melanie Sacco - 2nd Place

Carina Barth - 3rd Place

★ Kudos ★

Big kudos to **all of BTI** for being so cooperative and helpful when asked to accommodate Building Care Staff for all of the special projects we undertake to keep the Institute looking great. We really appreciate your help!

- Judy & Kim

Kudos to **Mary Westlake** for her diligent work in helping John D. and I in preparing the IP report for the Board. Many errors would have been overlooked without her help! Thanks, Mary.

- Paul Debbie

I think that we owe big thanks (and kudos) to **Jude Tulla** for all of the loyal and helpful service she has given us over the past years, and to wish her well on her emigration to Thunder Bay in Canada. It should be an exciting new adventure for her. We will miss her cheery good-natured help.

- Carl Leopold

Kudos to our fabulous Summer Student Symposium judges: **Carl Leopold, Dick Staples, and Denise Costich**, as well as **Haiyang Wang, Brian Gollands, and Shawna Williams**. Thank you for taking the time to critique the undergraduate and high school presentations!

- Nicole Markelz

Kudos to **Liz Estabrook** and **Shawna Williams** for setting up all of the food for the symposium. I'm pretty sure that the whole event would have failed miserably without you two! Also, kudos go to **Georg Jander** for cracking the whip and keeping the student speakers on schedule.

- Nicole Markelz

A second kudos goes to **Lisa Christian** for dealing with all of the student paychecks, teacher stipends, travel reimbursements and all the other stuff I keep putting on her desk. One kudo was definitely not enough.

- Nicole Markelz

Kudos to **Jude Tulla** and **Don Slocum** for laboriously removing all of the furniture from the atrium, setting it up to my exact specifications for the symposium, and then putting it all back after. It looked great!

- Nicole Markelz

★ Awards & Rewards ★

The following people have all received awards/rewards for recent accomplishments:

Elaine Van Etten, who worked for more than 3 months to solve an installation problem with ImageQuant (software used by the Martin and Stern Labs). Elaine worked relentlessly to troubleshoot and pursue all possible solutions. Ultimately, the problem was caused by faulty programming by ImageQuant programmers. The problem is now solved.

Hong Gu Kang, for his help in translating new employee orientation to a new Korean postdoc.

Tom Bollenbach, for his hard work in completing his first grant application.

Poster winners at the 2005 Scientific Retreat:

Postdocs:

1st Place - Vered Irijimovich

2nd Place - Kerry Pedley

3rd Place - Jianping Yang

Student/Technician:

1st Place - Rob Abramovitch

2nd Place - Linda Rymarquis

3rd Place - Jeff Anderson

★ Bombers Are Da Bomb! ★

The BTI Bombers softball team finished off their season on August 4 with an 18-5 drubbing of the not-so-aptly-named Unbeatables. This season—the fourth for the Bombers—was the best ever for the team, which won first place in the league with 10 wins, two losses and one tie.

“People came to every game this year, and were real happy to be there,” explained Brian Conlin, this year’s team captain. “Before, we never knew if we’d even get the eight people we needed to be able to play.”



Brian also said former BTI'er David Burke deserved much credit for the team's success because of his strong pitching and catching abilities. The Bombers' greatest victory was a 19-2 win over the Fighting Headless Chicken on July 5. By the end of the season, the Bombers had become so intimidating that the Short Bus team forfeited rather than risk humiliation.

The team hasn't decided whether to switch from Cornell's intramural recreational league to a competitive league next year.

Along with Brian, David, and co-captain Ryan McQuinn, this year's team included Jeff Anderson, Tracy Blasioli, Jen Brady, Katrice Bullock, Art Kason, Steve Mosher, Shinya Murakami, Greg Olsefski, Melanie Sacco, Kerry Pedley, Anne Rea, Jake Mace, Dayo Fashoyin, Jose Soto, Beth Takacs, and #1 Fan Liza Conrad. Games were on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30; the season ran from June 21 to August 4. - Shawna Williams

The BTI Administrative Assistants have implemented some of the following practices and have had great success in decreasing their stress levels and improving their overall mood and performance. Feel free to try some of these! I've taken the liberty of including names of BTI'ers who might benefit from specific activities. ;)

Phone someone in the office you barely know, leave your name and say, “Just called to say I can't talk right now. Bye.” (Kerry Curtiss)

While riding the elevator, gasp dramatically every time the doors open. (Helene Javot)

Say to your boss, “I like your style” and shoot him with double-barreled fingers. (Donna Meyer)

Babble incoherently at a fellow employee then ask, “Did you get all that, I don't want to have to repeat it.” (Jeffrey ‘Sweetpea’ Heichel)

During the course of a meeting, slowly edge your chair towards the door. (John Dentes)

Arrange toy figures on the table to represent each meeting attendee, move them according to the movements of their real-life counterparts. (Tom Bollenbach and Patrice Dubois)

At lunchtime, sit in your parked car with sunglasses on and point a hair dryer at passing cars. See if they slow down. (Joan Curtiss)

Put decaf in the coffee maker for 3 weeks. Once everyone has gotten over his or her caffeine addictions, switch to espresso. (Nicole & Shawna)

When the money comes out of the ATM, scream “I Won! I Won! 3rd time this week!!!” (Phyllis Farmer)

My...How You've Grown!

by Valleri

Where does the time go? Some of us have been at BTI so long, we've seen each other's children go from infants to young adults to big adults! As a Hub special assignment, I received a suggestion to query BTI'ers who may have had children graduating from high school or college this year and to tell us what their future plans are.

My son, **Jeff**, graduated from Skaneateles High School this year. He will be attending Hamilton College beginning in a couple of days, majoring in economics. He will also be playing lacrosse for them. (Editor's Note: Jeff will also be mourning the loss of his big bedroom as the next Pola son in line moves into it!!)

- Lucy Pola

During one of my son **Matthew's** summer vacations he worked with Peter Woodbury (former Environmental Biology Program member) at the BTI field site weeding and doing ozone damage assessments on hybrid poplar. Matthew was so turned on by the experience (not!) that he decided to follow his dad's footsteps and go into Ag. Economics (the business curriculum) at Cornell! The best side of this story is that after about 6 months of buying and selling grain for a firm in Kansas City, Matt decided that the sciences weren't so bad. He applied to UMKC Dental School, aced the G-whatever exams, was accepted and graduated with a DDS two years later. He did a Postdoc at a hospital in Buffalo and now has his own dental practice in Cortland. He is married and has three children. So much for following the old man!

- John Dentes

My son, **Greg**, worked at BTI as an hourly student for the past three years. He just graduated with honors from Candor Central School where he is a member of the National Honor Society, has served on the student council, participated in Varsity Football and Varsity Track, ski club, drama club, debate club and Culture Club, in which he traveled to both Costa Rica and Spain. He has performed various community service work, working local blood drives, raising food and funds for the food pantry, cleanup work at the schools, roadside cleanup and assisting coaching T-ball. Greg will be attending Syracuse University this fall where he has received the Syracuse University Chancellor Scholarship Award and the Syracuse University Merit Scholarship. He will be a student of the L.C. Smith College of Engineering where he will major in Aerospace Engineering and minor in Astrophysics.

His most memorable BTI event - Valleri cracking eggs open on his head at a BTI Family Picnic!!! (Editor's Note: Although I have no recollection of this event, I would like to state that I'm certain no chickens or other yard fowl were harmed in the process.)

- Kim Huizinga

PIE PALOOZA 2005

Another successful and palate-pleasing palooza has come to pass. This year we had 20 excellent pies to choose from. Surprisingly, a large number of participants were our summer interns!

Here's the list of pies from this year:

Apple, Apple Custard, Apricot Ginger, Blueberry, Cherry/Rhubarb, Chocolate Pecan, CUC? (chocolaty oreo-type), Fluffy Lemon Fruit, Just Eat It!, Key Lime Cheesecake Pie, Mango Mangle, Mincemeat Hot, Mincemeat Cold, Oreo Surprise, Peach, Peach Cream, Pecan, Pineapple/Strawberry, Raspberry Ricotta, and Vallerina's Most Delectable Nestle Tollhouse Pie.



The pristine sea of pies...before the mayhem...



The official and founding members of the Pie Alliance (Bob Kohut, Brian Gollands and Vallerina) and honorary Alliance member, Nicole Markelz.

THE HUB


Boyce Thompson Institute
Editor, Valleri Longcoy
Email: VLL2@cornell.edu

2005 BTI BOMBERS

1st Place Winners


Cornell Intramural Recreational League

**B
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R
S**




Jeff Anderson
Second Base

**B
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S**




Jose Soto
Right Field

**B
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B
E
R
S**




Dayo Tashoyin
"Black Magic"

**B
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R
S**




Steve Mosher
Third Base

**B
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Katrice Bullock
First Base

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Kerry Pedley
Left Field

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Liza Conrad
#1 Fan

**B
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Tracy Blasioh

**B
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Anne Rea
Catcher
Team Cheerleader

**B
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S**




Brian Conlin
Short Stop

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Art Kasson
Catcher

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Ryan McQuinn
Center Field

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David Burke
Pitcher

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Greg Olsefski
Right Field

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Jen Brady
Catcher

**B
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Shinya Murakami
Right field