

BiNews

February 2024

Mammoth Milestone

Maureen Manning joined the department 20 years ago when Ethan Clotfelter brought her aboard to help in his lab. Maureen soon transitioned to a department-wide role, and her wisdom, initiative, and her incredible ability to solve all sorts of lab-related problems have made her indispensable. She is often one of the first people to welcome new folks to the department, and she has done so much to help foster community within Biology. Her keen organizational skills have enlightened so many of us to the joys of a label maker, and our offices are often decorated with plants that she's shared or gnomes that she's sewn. She is generous with her time, expertise, and thoughtfulness, and for this, we are incredibly grateful. Thanks, Maureen, for all that you do to help and support us in so many ways!!



News from Trapani Lab: Recent paper chosen for the 2023 Journal of Experimental Biology Outstanding Paper Prize shortlist

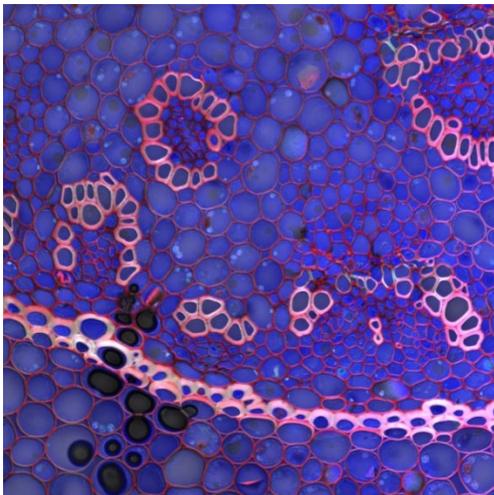
"Moving on from the impact of human activity on an insect species, Pat Wright's shortlisted nomination reveals how the mechanosensory lateral line of larval zebrafish contribute to their ability to achieve neutral buoyancy. In an elegant series of experiments, Alexandra Venuto (East Carolina University, USA), with colleagues from Amherst College, USA, and the University of New Brunswick, Canada, showed that the larval fish use the lateral line to detect when they have reached the surface of the water, allowing them to gulp sufficient air into their swim bladders to achieve neutral buoyancy (jeb245635). 'I was impressed that the authors used multiple manipulations to alter the function of lateral line neuromast cells with very strong and consistent evidence that these cells regulate the initial filling of the swim bladder', says Wright, adding 'in deciding to follow up on that observation, Venuto and colleagues have discovered a very new role for the lateral line'."

<https://journals.biologists.com/jeb/article/227/3/jeb247403/342993>

News from the Amherst Biology Image Center

Lampros Panagis, ABIC Director, will be sharing a monthly ABIC image.

Below is from his calibration slide. It was the first image Lampros got on the LSM980!



Confocal image of part of a coronal section through the stem of a lily of the valley plant (*Convallaria* sp.) showing autofluorescence in the channels (blue, green, red) and morphology using transmitted illumination.

Biology DEI Kahoot

The Biology DEI Interns hosted a Biology-themed Kahoot and open meeting on Monday, February 26th. A handful of students attended to learn more about the Biology Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, as well as offer feedback.

News from the Wu Orr Lab

Carl Soderstrom (Wu Orr lab BCBP '24 thesis student) accepted a research assistant position in Professor Mike Laub's lab at MIT.

As a part of the Laub lab, Carl will be studying the mechanisms of anti-phages defense as well as identifying novel anti-phage defense systems. Congrats, Carl!



Baby Isaac has been visiting the Science Center. He enjoys lounging on the sofa in Professor Wu Orr's office before attending Bio Department meetings.

Dr. Bowers attends HHMI Biointeractive Ambassador Academy

Christina Bowers recently completed the inaugural 3-year HHMI Biointeractive Ambassador Academy, along with colleagues from across the US, Canada and Mexico. Ambassadors work closely with BioInteractive to promote and support evidence-based teaching practices, drive change in science education, and elevate the professional and scholarly profile of science teaching. As an active ambassador, Dr. Bowers' work will continue, with a focus on outreach and inclusive pedagogy in higher education STEM settings.



If you have any updates for the next issue of BioNews, please send them to Ldavis@amherst.edu.