The Matrix Letter

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The Ki of Collagen
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Contents

Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Matrix Biologists,

This is my final President's letter. My two-year term has gone by quickly and soon Jeff Davidson will take the reins. My "state of the union" comes at the end of the term so below I have summarized our accomplishments and where I think we are heading in the near future.

The recent joint ASMB/SFG meeting was very successful. This is the first time we have co-organized our biennial meeting with another society. The potential advantages that led us into this joint venture came to be - our members were exposed to a diverse range of outstanding science on topics related to matrix and the meeting environment promoted interactions between matrix biologists and glycobiologists. Our hope is that together these advantages stimulated you to think of new ideas for experiments and helped you to identify new collaborators.

Interactions with other societies are becoming a tradition for the ASMB with pre-meeting guest symposia at the past few biennial meetings. Based on the success of this joint meeting, we should consider interspersing an occasional joint meeting amongst a series of ASMB biennial meetings. In the future, we might consider partnering with TERMIS or NAVBO on a similar joint meeting adventure. In the meantime, our next biennial meeting will be ASMB only, allowing us to expand the number of matrix-centric topics and sessions. Maybe we will even attract some of the glycobiologists who saw the excitement in matrix biology at the 2012 meeting.

One important feature of the biennial conference is the face-to-face meeting of the Council to discuss ASMB business. This year's Council meeting, held on Sunday morning November 11 at the Sheraton hotel, was very interactive, productive, and lively. In attendance were the entire Executive Committee (EC: President, Past President, President elect, Secretary/Treasurer), 10 of 11 Council members, the Newsletter editor, and two FASEB staff members. Major items on the agenda were elections, committee membership and duties, finances, the Handbook, current and future biennial meetings, and our relationships with other matrix societies. Overall, the society is in very good shape. Joanne Murphy-Ullrich, the ASMB Secretary / Treasurer, will report on finances in a future newsletter. I cannot claim to be the Bill Clinton of ASMB leaving office with a large budget surplus, but there's no fiscal cliff and I didn't start any wars!

Always busy, President (2010-12) Jean Schwarzbauer (Princeton) takes time to talk during the mentoring breakfast. (for more on the mentoring breakfast, see page 9).

With helpful comments from the Council, the ASMB Handbook has been completed. A main purpose of the Handbook is to codify the job descriptions and duties of the officers and committees in one document that then provides a framework to help keep us focused on our mission and to enhance Council and membership engagement in ASMB activities. To maintain society momentum, regularly scheduled conference calls of the EC and Council will be held to report on committee activities, discuss pressing issues, and plan ahead. The Handbook will also be useful for potential candidates for office who can look and see what their duties will be, if elected.

At the 2010 Council meeting, then President Bill Parks established a new slate of committees by streamlining, merging, and/or eliminating existing committees. At the 2012 meeting, we focused on the duties of two of these committees, the Membership Committee and the Website Committee. These two are interconnected since the ASMB website is (or should be) a member benefit. The Membership Committee, which will be chaired by the next Secretary/ Treasurer, is tasked with investigating the member benefits offered by other societies and thinking about how ASMB can better serve its members. In parallel, the Website Committee, with Councilor Dwayne Stupack at the helm and help from Kayla Bayless, will come up with ideas on how we might improve the usefulness of our site to our members. For both of these committees, it would be great if we had member volunteers to provide their insights and ideas. Please feel free to email me or our Executive Director, Kendra LaDuca, for information or to offer your services. Student and post-doc volunteers are welcome.

The Newsletter, headed by Marian Young and Dwayne Stupack, is in good shape as you can see on the following pages. Some new ideas for newsletter feature articles and columns were suggested by councilors. One of these columns might relate to the newly named Professional Development and Diversity Committee. A primary duty of this committee will be to organize and oversee the career breakfasts at the biennial meeting; these have been very popular events with junior scientists. Thanks to Dwayne Stupack for stepping in on short notice to organize this year's breakfasts. Career development is a continuous process and we are seeking a committee chair who is excited about providing career advice in between the meetings. Any volunteers?

The next meeting will be held in the fall of 2014. Date and time will be decided in early 2013 with input from the next President-elect. The venue also remains to be determined but we hope to identify a site that has a local population of ECM biologists, perhaps in the middle of the country or near a coast at a site that we haven't been to previously. Whether we should move to annual meetings was discussed by Council and remains an ongoing topic. Intervening years between the main biennial meeting could have a more specialized meeting, a shorter meeting, or one that focuses on student and post-doc presentations. Any feedback from the membership about this topic would be appreciated and considered.

Jean poses with incoming ASMB president-elect Jeff Davidson at the ASMB/SfG joint last November.

There are multiple matrix biology societies across the globe. How can matrix societies work together internationally to enhance our cause and to give the matrix a more prominent place in the minds of all biologists? We have solid associations with other societies already. For example, ASMB has a longstanding relationship with the ISMB as evidenced by the ISMB participation in our past meetings. ASMB and ISMB also share a mutual interest in the journal ***Matrix Biology*** and I expect this connection to strengthen as the new Editor-in-Chief Renato Iozzo (former ASMB President) takes over ***Matrix Biology*** in January.

Informal discussions with members of the ISMB about how we can work effectively together to promote the matrix worldwide have begun and will hopefully expand to include matrix societies inCanada, Japan, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, Asia, and possibly other places. Our emphasis on cooperation will continue well into Jeff's term and beyond.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you'. Thanks to Bill Parks and Renato Iozzo for convincing me to run for ASMB president-elect. I have really enjoyed this job, especially because it allowed me to make a contribution to the society and to the matrix biology field more generally. Thanks to Jeff and Joanne for being terrific officers to work with, always full of good ideas and advice that made my job easier. Thank you Jen Holland for teaching me about the society and how it works during the first year of my term, and to Kendra LaDuca for the ease with which she stepped into Jen's shoes and handled all my demands. Thanks to the Council members who volunteered to help out when I emailed. And a special thanks to all Matrix Biologists for filling our field with interesting and exciting science!

Best wishes and happy holidays,

Jean Schwarzbauer
ASMB President

2012 Election Results

In addition to the changes in the ASMB presidency this year, we also congratulate our newly elected officers.

Welcome to our new president elect, **Suneel Apte**, who serves a two year term until assuming the presidency in 2015.

Congratulations to our new Secretary-Treasurer, **Ambra Pozzi**, who assumes office for 4 years, until 2016.

Finally, congratulations to our newly elected councilors, **Caroline Alexander, Peter Bruckner, Billy Hudson, Dieter Reinhardt** and **Hiromi Yanagisawa.**

Thank you for your willingness to serve. We look forward to an exciting 2013 and beyond.

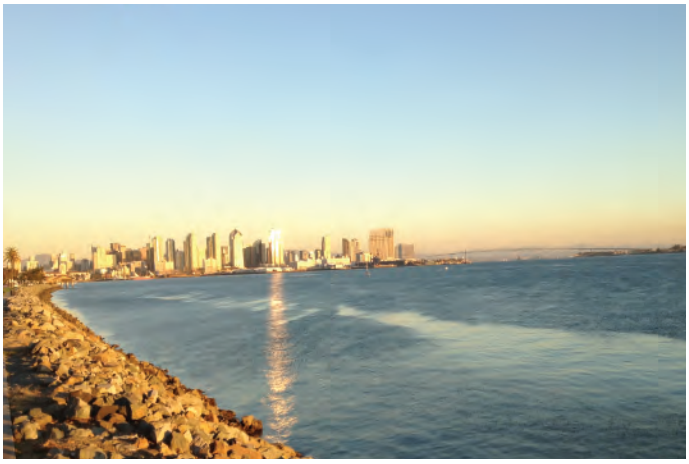
The ASMB-SfG Joint Meeting

San Diego, CA, 11-14 Nov 2012

With an attendance of 652 conferees representing 37 states and 27 nations, the combined meeting of matrix and glycobiologists was a successful effort to bring together two groups with strongly overlapping interests. The Program Committee organized a balanced menu of wide-ranging topics, and thus most of the plenary sessions included speakers from both organizations. Space and time constraints did limit the typical breadth of the ASMB plenary topics; however, the speakers for the 16 concurrent sessions were screened and selected for scientific merit prior to being assigned to relevant sessions. Most of the sessions were well attended through the last day and hour of the meeting, despite the lovely weather and surroundings.

Many showed up for the Sunday pre-conference meetings: two SfG-affiliated sessions on glycomics and an excellent ASMB-TERMIS gathering on tissue engineering that melded perfectly with the main program. The opening meeting reception that evening was followed by a stimulating address from Carolyn Bertozzi (UC Berkeley) on the conceptual framework for bioorthogonal chemistry – creating reporter biomolecules that do not perturb intermolecular interactions and cell/animal physiology. After a full day of plenary, poster and concurrent sessions, the second evening of the meeting was used by each society to honor distinguished contributions from its respective field. Tom Barker (Georgia Tech) received the Junior Investigator award in recognition of his growing contributions to matrix assembly and biomechanics, while Billy Hudson (Vanderbilt) received the Senior Investigator award to acknowledge of his long-standing contributions to understanding the structure and assembly of collagen IV molecules. Billy gave a wonderful account of his continuing progress in the area with an additional glimpse into his dedication to secondary science education. Richard Hynes (MIT) was recognized by the ISMB for his outstanding work on the matrix and integrin receptors. Richard addressed the conferees on his current venture into unraveling the "matrisome" and the insights it has provided. The session concluded with three short presentations from recipients ISMB travel awards.

During the course of the meeting, we also recognized 10 outstanding platform/poster presenters* with $500 travel awards. In addition, Vince Hascall presented the



Herb Tabor Young Investigator Award to Alexandra Naba (MIT) for her innovative contributions to matrix proteomics. Two FASEB MARC awards recognized the contributions of Deborah Leon (BU) and Kristina Aguilera (UT Southwestern)

Following another very full day of platform and poster sessions, the final evening of the meeting was a well-attended (395) social event with live entertainment arranged by the SfG co-chair, Hudson Freeze. Dancing continued into the night.

Career mentoring breakfasts on Monday and Tuesday mornings were fully subscribed. These sessions allowed 40 young attendees to sit down at one of five tables with one or two of our more seasoned ASMB scientists to discuss the future of the discipline as well as strategies for funding, career progress, and future employment. Wednesday morning opened with a very timely, enlightening and up to date assessment of the federal biomedical perspective from Jennifer Zeitzer, Director of Legislative Relations for FASEB.

The success of the meeting was due in no small part to the expertise of Jen Holland and Kendra LaDuca at FASEB, the dedication of our Program Committee (Elaine Davis, Tom Barker, Dave Roberts, Linda Sandell, and Ambra Pozzi), and the persuasive powers of our fundraiser-in chief, Maurizio Pacifici. As a result of the combined efforts, we were able to assemble a nicely integrated program with our counterparts from the SfG and to garner enthusiastic support from both the NIH and 32 commercial sponsors. The breakfast setup in the exhibit hall was also very favorable to sponsor-attendee interaction.

Jeff Davidson
President, ASMB

2012 Meeting Sponsorship

Thank-you from the membership of the ASMB to all of our sponsors who made the joint meeting possible. Fundraising for this meeting was headed by Maurizio Pacifici, who faced the daunting task of helping raise funds for a joint meeting in San Diego.

In addition to funding form the National Institutes of Health National Institutes of Health (NIAMS, NIA, NICHD, NIDDK) Award Number R13-AR-063587, we also received and recognized funding at four different levels from corporate and foundation sponsorships.

You can find all of the sponsors listed here, if you are trying to remember which booth you were visiting when you inispiration struck...

The exhibitor floor in Ballroom A was bustling during the joint meeting of the ASMB and Society for Glycobiology.

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Matrix Interactions

ASMB News and Announcements in Brief

Matrix Biology has New Editor-in- Chief

It is with great pleasure that we announce the appointment of Renato Iozzo, who served as President of ASMB from 2007-2008, as the incoming editor of ***Matrix Biology***. Renato has graciously accepted the position and will begin duties in January 2013.

Congratulations and many thanks to Renato (pictured at right) for his dedicated service to the field of matrix biology!

2012 ASMB Award Winners

We congratulate the following award winners who were recognized at the ASMB/SfG Joint Meeting in San Diego this past November:

Travel Award Winners
Lisa Ang, *University of British Columbia*
Vivek Desai, *Princeton University*
Alon Hendel, *University of British Columbia*
Marion Jeanne, *University of California, San Francisco*
Sandeep Khatri, *University of Pittsburgh*
Rooz Khosravi, *Boston University*
Ryan Petrie, *National Institutes of Health*
Purva Singh, *Princeton University*
Yoshito Yamishiro, *UT Southwestern Medical Center*
Kurt Zimmerman, *University of Alabama at Birmingham*

Upcoming Events

January 26-29, 2013
San Antonio, TX **ORS: Orthopaedic Research Society**
www.ors.org/2013annualmeeting/

February 10-15, 2013
Ventura, CA Gordon Conference:
Fibronectin, Integrins, and Related Molecules
www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2013&program=fibronec

March 25-26, 2013
British Society for Matrix Biology - Spring Meeting
www.bsmb.ac.uk/meetings/index.html

April 18-21, 2013
Philadelphia, PA
Osteoarthritis Research Society International:
2013.oarsi.org/

May 1-5, 2013
Denver, CO
Wound Healing Society
www.woundheal.org/annual-meeting

May 19-24, 2013
Barga, Italyrdon Conference
Matrix Metalloproteinases
www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2013&program=matrix

July 14-19, 2013
New London, NH Gordon Conference: **Collagen**
www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2013&program=collagen

July 20-21, 2013
New London, NH Gordon Conference: **Elastin, Elastic Fibers and Microfibrils**
www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2013&program=matrix

July 28-August 2, 2013
Vermont Academy, Saxtons River, VT
2013 FASEB Summer Meeting
Matricellular Proteins in Development, Health and Disease.
Co-Chairs: Joanne Murphy-Ullrich, UAB Amy Bradshaw, MUSC
https://secure.faseb.org/faseb/meetings/Summrconf/Programs/11736.pdf

Holderness NH, Gordon Conference:
Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering
http://www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2013&program=grs_biomat

August 25-29, 2013
Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Eight international Conference on Proteoglycans
www.proteoglycans2013.com

ASMB Career Awardees

ASMB Junior Investigator Award

Thomas Barker,
Georgia Institute of Technology

ISMB Distinguished Investigator Award

Richard Hynes,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

ASMB Senior Investigator Award

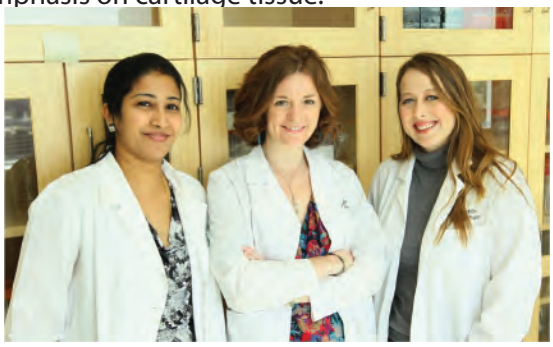
Billy Hudson,
Vanderbilt University

The Ki of Collagen

Audrey McAlinden
Washington University, St. Louis, MO

The McAlinden laboratory is located in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Washington University. In January 2012, the Orthopaedic Surgery basic science laboratories moved to the 11th floor of the BJC-Institute of Health building situated in the School of Medicine Campus. Here, a Musculoskeletal Center has been established consisting of research groups within the Departments of Orthopaedic Surgery and Internal Medicine (Division of Bone and Mineral Research).

Audrey McAlinden is currently an Assistant Professor and her research program is focused on understanding molecular mechanisms regulating skeletal development, homeostasis, degradation and regeneration with an emphasis on cartilage tissue.



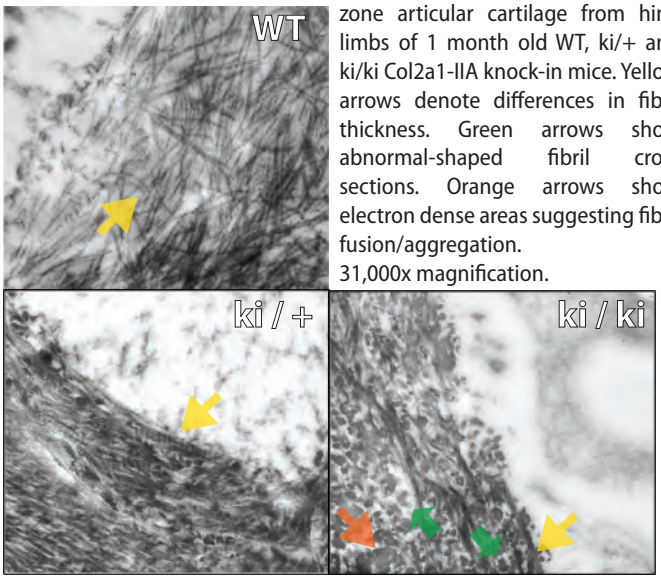
1. The McAlinden Lab (http://audreymcalinden.org). Soumya Ravindran (left) and Louisa Wirthlin (right) flank Dr. McAlinden.

Currently, 3 main projects are underway: 1) Understand how the type II collagen embryonic-to-adult isoform switch affects skeletal development and function; 2) Determine functional roles for non-coding RNAs (microRNAs) in controlling stem cell differentiation toward the chondrocyte lineage and, 3) Elucidate the effects of biomaterials on chondrogenic stem cell differentiation.

For the first project, a knock-in mouse model has been developed to express only the embryonic (IIA) isoform of type II collagen throughout pre- and post-natal development while the IIB isoform, normally synthesized by differentiated cartilage chondrocytes, is inhibited.1 Persistent expression of IIA procollagen was confirmed by both immunohistochemical techniques and by a novel quantitative alternative-transcript PCR method that distinguishes between IIA and IIB mRNA isoforms.

Although heterozygous (ki/+) and homozygous (ki/ki) knock-in mice displayed no overt phenotype, differences in collagen ultrastructure were found in both articular cartilage and trabecular bone at 1 month of age. Specifically, collagen fibrils appear abnormally large and fused (Fig. 2). Studies are underway to determine the mechanism causing this defect in collagen matrix assembly. We hypothesize that expression of the IIA form of type XI collagen (the α3 chain of which is also encoded by the Col2a1 gene) may alter the function of this minor collagen in regulating type II collagen fibrillogenesis. We also hypothesize that an ECM containing inappropriate levels of IIA collagen (as found in osteoarthritic cartilage and engineered cartilage tissue, for example) disrupts matrix homeostasis thus rendering the tissue more susceptible to degradation. Interestingly, femurs and tibias of 4 month old ki/+ and ki/ki mice appear unusually dense with altered mechanical properties suggesting brittleness. These findings raise important questions related to the cross-talk between cartilage and bone and the importance of a proper cartilage template for endochondral bone formation.

2. Transmission electron micrographs of pericellular matrix of midzone zone articular cartilage from hind limbs of 1 month old WT, ki/+ and ki/ki Col2a1-IIA knock-in mice. Yellow arrows denote differences in fibril thickness. Green arrows show abnormal-shaped fibril cross sections. Orange arrows show electron dense areas suggesting fibril fusion/aggregation. 31,000x magnification.



In the second project we have utilized laser capture technology and TaqMan® miRNA OpenArrays® to identify miRNAs that are differentially expressed between three regions of human embryonic developing cartilage. At Day 54-56 of development, we can distinguish between populations of precursor chondrocytes, differentiated chondrocytes and hypertrophic chondrocytes. We now plan to identify functional roles for selected miRNAs in controlling specific phases of chondrocyte differentiation.

The third project, in collaboration with Dr. Donald Elbert at Washington University, involves studying the effects of biomaterials (PEG microspheres) on the chondrogenic response of human mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs). We have shown profound differences in cartilage gene and protein expression when MSCs are cultured in 3D pellets in the presence of these microspheres. This data was published recently in the journal Biomaterials.3 We hypothesize that interaction of MSCs with the biomaterials themselves (via integrins or other means) alters the MSC chondrogenic response to growth factors. We aim to determine the mechanisms regulating these responses and how this translates to engineered tissue quality and function.

From all three projects, we will learn new information on how cartilage and long bone develops in vivo and, ultimately, to then apply this knowledge to devise alternative strategies for cartilage and bone tissue repair and regeneration.

Current collaborators:
Russell Fernandes, *Department of Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine, University of Washington.*

Matthew Silva, *Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Washington University.*

Uwe Hansen, *Department of Physiological Chemistry and Pathobiochemistry, University of Muenster.*

Donald Elbert, Department of Biomedical Engineering, Washington University.

Thomas Hering *(formerly at Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology, University of Kentucky).*

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Bioengineering of Articular Cartilage and Intervertebral Disc Replacements

Justin Parreno & Elisabeth Rok
The Kandel Laboratory, Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, ON Canada

TThe Kandel laboratory is located in the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, Canada. We are a multidisciplinary team consisting of biologists, engineers, material scientists and clinicians who are working to further develop bioengineered articular cartilage as well as intervertebral disc replacements.

1. The Kandel Lab ***Front Row*** (*Left to Right*): Sarah Lepage, Shu Qiu Li, Rita Kandel, Justin Parreno, Sabrina Paez-Parent. ***Back Row*** (*Left to Right*): Elisabeth Rok, Jian Tang, Nazish Ahmed, Mortah Nabavi Niaki, Jonathan Iu, Vanessa Bianchi, Elizabeth Delve, David Lee.
Missing: Drew Taylor, Sarah Kwon, Sneha Raju

Articular Cartilage
Our research has focused on developing biphasic articular cartilage constructs consisting of chondrocytes seeded on top of a porous bone substitute. These cells form an integrated articular cartilage tissue matrix rich in type II collagen and proteoglycans over time in culture (intended articulation surface). These biphasic constructs have been shown to be successful in repairing focal defects in an animal model.

However to repair clinically relevant defects, a large number of cells that maintain their phenotype is required. We are investigating the potential of various cell types such as induced pluripotent/embryonic stem cells, mesenchymal cells, as well as passaged chondrocytes to undergo articular chondrogenic differentiation. Our research has focused on investigating various media formulations, mechanical stimulus as well as microenvironment conditions to promote chondrogenesis and generate cartilaginous tissue in vitro. Passaged cells

appear to have the inherent ability to redifferentiate and reacquire the chondrocyte phenotype under defined conditions. Furthermore, we are gaining insight into the process of dedifferentiation. Within the laboratory we are studying how standard passaging culture conditions (stiff 2D polystyrene and serum) influences various signaling molecules within the cell. One example of this is recent work showing how actin remodelling is an impetus in the acquisition of a myofibroblastic phenotype during monolayer expansion of chondrocytes.

Another major focus in the lab is to improve the integration of in vitro formed cartilage with the surrounding joint tissue following implantation. We have developed an in vitro model demonstrating the integration of bioengineered cartilage involves migration of cells from the constructs into host tissue. To improve the strength of our constructs, studies have been conducted on generating a zone of calcified cartilage juxtaposed to the bone substitute. Such organization has led to improved interfacial shear strength of the constructs.

We believe that such studies will lead to the development of fully differentiated chondrocytes able to establish large, mechanically strong bioengineered biphasic constructs able to withstand loads once placed in vivo.

Intervertebral Disc

Tissue engineering strategies are also ongoing to develop bioengineered intervertebral disc. The mature disc, a poorly vascularized and innervated structure is located between the vertebral bodies of the spinal column. It is composed of three interdependent tissues: the annulus fibrosus, nucleus pulposus and a cartilaginous interface, the latter which facilitates integration to the adjacent vertebral body.

In addition to characterizing native tissue and investigating interactions between different cell populations in the disc, we have established methods to form the various component tissues in vitro. Multilayer annulus fibrosis tissue has been generated using aligned nanofibrous polyurethane, a non-toxic biodegradable scaffold that promotes cell alignment and attachment. This approach has allowed us to study the development of annulus fibrosus tissue in vitro. We have also successfully formed nucleus pulposus tissue on a biodegradable bone substitute which demonstrates resistance to compression, attaining modulus values similar to those for the native tissue.

Furthermore, an in vitro composite model of the nucleus pulposus cartilage interface co-culture of articular chondrocytes and nucleus pulposus cells in 3D culture conditions has demonstrated the influence of cartilage on nucleus pulposus matrix deposition. Current research foci include investigation of cell-cell and tissue-tissue interactions, 3D co-culture conditions and mechanical stimulation to improve disc tissue formation.

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Arrivederci Bjorn... The Frank Sinatra of Matrix Biology

Bjorn Olsen is leaving the editorship of Matrix Biology after a decade of dedicated and arduous work. I thought about a definition of Bjorn and the best I could come up with is an analogy to "blue eyes". This phenotypic trait in common with Frank Sinatra is reinforced by a unique ability, also called real talent that both Frank and Bjorn share. That is an innate ability to make difficult things, such as singing 'My Way' or cloning collagen genes (when *nobody* knew how to do it) or discovering novel stem cell pathways, appear very simple.

This is a hallmark of a great scientist, pedagogue and editor. Insight and critical thinking are two key attributes of Bjorn. In the past decade, Bjorn has been instrumental in maintaining the high quality of the journal. He has personally handled all the research manuscripts and made all the editorial decisions that at time were difficult. Bjorn is also very fortunate to have had the assistance of the wonderful and talented Yulia Pittel for all of these years. She is truly one of a kind. We will all miss Bjorn's editorials from the "Editor Desk". However, I hope he will continue with guest editorials for many years to come.

On behalf of all the matrix biology community, I wish to thank Bjorn for an outstanding job and wish him great success in his forthcoming scientific endeavors. I believe the future of Matrix Biology is bright, given the expansion of our field and the continuous success of the ASMB and other international matrix meetings. This means higher quality of original research and increased visibility for our emerging field. I hope that you will continue to submit the best research to the journal which is undergoing a significant transformation in expansion, organization, and direction.

Past and Present Chiefs. Incoming editor-in-chief Renato Iozzo Poses with outgoing editor-in-chief Bjorn Olson.

Finally I would like to say "Arrivederci" in many languages representative of the international nature of our journal: So Bjorn…….see you later, auf wiedersehen, au revoir, adiós, adeus , 切断, 굿바이, 再见, תוארתהל, αντίο, viszlát, وداع , farvel, tot ziens, hejdå, la revedere and do widzenia!

Renato V. Iozzo
Editor-In-Chief
Matrix Biology

Career Mentorship Breakfast

One of the highlights of the past ASMB/SfG joint meeting, from the perspective of scientists in training, was the career mentoring breakfast. Each table had one or two mentors to advise students, fellows and even junior scientists. Topics covered ranged from finding academic or industry positions, to the availability of alternative careers, to the unique challenges facing women who want both an academic career and a family.

An animated discussion takes place at one of the tables f ocused on career options in industry.

There are no patent answers to any of these questions; each person's situation is unique. However, ASMB members were generous with their time, starting form the top down. Both our past president and secretary treasurer, Drs. Schwarzbauer and Murphy-Ullrich and those incoming - Drs. Suneel Apte and Ambra Pozzi, respectively, hosted tables . Thanks also to Myron Szewczuk, Ralph Sanderson, Pyong Park, Jeff Esko and Linda Baum, who added their experiences to the event.

- Dwayne Stupack

The Editor's Page

New Editorial Team of the Matrix Letter

In the beginning, there was Bob. The first president of the ASMB, Robert Mecham, served a double duty as the founding editor of the ASMB newsletter, and would stay involved for the decade after his presidency passed to Paul Bornstein. To say that Bob has been here since the beginning is actually an understatement. Bob was one of the organizers of Matrix 2000 in St. Louis, where the ground work for the ASMB was laid. So I suppose its more appropriate to say that he's been key to the society since before there was a society.

Robert Mecham, PhD

He recalls how, in the early years, everything was done in an incredibly hands-on fashion by committee members, including everything from procuring/writing content to editing to typesetting our newsletter. Admittedly, the ASMB is an inclusive society that spreads responsibility among many, and certainly our officers typically change every few years. Yet somehow, over the years, Bob never actually lost the position of editing and typesetting the newsletter. In fact, he would have been willing to help with this issue, although he was similarly willing to pass the torch along to others. After all, he has been faithfully serving the ASMB for more than a decade in this role, even while editing other ASMB-relevant works, including the Biology of the Extracellular Matrix Series and The Extracellular Matrix; An Overview. Even now, Bob is only stepping back, not away, from the newsletter. He is ever-present, and willing to patiently provide advice. I think we all recognize how rare this type of selflessness is, and thus I believe I speak for the entire ASMB when I thank Bob for his years of enduring service. The ASMB would not be the ASMB were it not for him. And so, thank you, Bob, from all of us.

Others, such as current co-editor Marian Young, have stepped up to edit the newsletter. I suppose I am now the newest addition in this league as well. As the 'new' editor I will depend upon Marian to guide us forward, and will certainly be making my share of calls to Bob for guidance even as we seek to expand the content offered in the Newsletter.

Marian Young, PhD

Dwayne Stupack, PhD

Dwayne Stupack
ASMB Councilor (2015)
Editor, The Matrix Letter

Call For Content

The content of the ASMB newsletter evolves over time. As you may have noted, we have rebranded the newsletter of the ASMB 'The Matrix Letter.' In addition to all the local ASMB news that you expect, we aim to include new content that fosters the mission of the ASMB:

...to promote basic, translational, and clinical research on the extracellular matrix (ECM), cell-ECM interactions, and ECM-based therapies and devices, and to support the growth and professional development of the ECM research community...

From the perspective of the newsletter, one way to do this is to connect ASMB researchers with each other, based on their research focus or their approach. Therefore, I would call on the membership to contribute. If your contribution happens to end up as our chosen cover illustration, there are tangible rewards (in the form of a gift card in the mail).

Matrix Mini-reviews

The Matrix Mini-review feature will be a focused summary the contribution of a particular lab (yours) in the context of the current state of knowledge in that field. Usually written by students, postdoctoral fellows or young faculty, the minireview runs a single written page, with a single scientific illustration and a lab photo, and less than 10 references.

Matrix Essays

The purpose of a Matrix Essay is to promote a new or breaking hypothesis in the field of Matrix biology, with the expressed purpose of garnering supporting evidence and collaborators from the greater ASMB membership. Matrix essays are one running page and may include a single illustration and up to 10 references.

Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor should be short and succinct, and will focus on alerting the ASMB membership to recent advances or concerns in our, and related, fields. A letter to the editor is limited to 200 words and three references.

Matrix Images

These are submissions of particularly beautiful (subjective!) images that you are willing to share with the membership, along with a caption explaining the image.

We look forward to your contributions. dgs/my

Reference Format

1) Lewis R, Ravindran S, Wirthlin L, Traeger G, Fernandes RJ, McAlinden A. Disruption of the developmentally-regulated Col2a1 alternative splicing switch in a transgenic knock-in mouse model. Matrix Biol. 2012 Apr, 31(3):214-26.