

# PASPCR

September 2005  
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## Newsletter



### Introduction...

by *Bill Oetting*

The 19<sup>th</sup> International Pigment Cell Conference was a great conference, full of impressive science and plenty of opportunity to interact with pigment scientists throughout the world. Vince Hearing even had the Reston Fire Department pay us a visit. Pictures of the IPCC are posted on the PASPCR web site. A copy of the IPCC meeting report will be posted on the PASPCR and IFPCS web site and published in the next issue of the *PASPCR Newsletter*.

The *PASPCR Newsletter* is published quarterly and is intended to serve as a means of communication for the members of our Society. You are invited to contribute articles, or other information you feel will be of interest to members of the **PASPCR**. If you attend a scientific meeting and have heard results which you think will be of interest to the membership of the PASPCR, please write a few paragraphs summarizing what was presented and share it with us. Any information on upcoming meetings of interest will be added to the "Calendar of Events". This is your newsletter, and we depend upon you to help us make sure it best serves the Society's needs. Contributions and comments can be sent to me, preferably by E-mail, to [bill@lenti.med.umn.edu](mailto:bill@lenti.med.umn.edu).

The PASPCR Web Site is the major, up-to-date source of current information for the PASPCR

The PASPCR Web Site can be found at:

<http://www.paspcr.org>

membership and for individuals who are interested in the PASPCR. If there is additional information that you would like to see on the Web site, or you would like to include information of past PASPCR activities, please let me know and I will add them.

The web site for the 20<sup>th</sup> IPCC can now be found at <http://www.e-convention.org/ipcc-imrc2008/>. The meeting will be held in Sapporo, Japan. You can contact Kowichi Jimbow at [ipcc-imrc2008@sapmed.ac.jp](mailto:ipcc-imrc2008@sapmed.ac.jp) for more information.

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### Don't Forget to Vote

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**The PanAmerican Society for  
Pigment Cell Research**

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Gisela Erf  
William Oetting  
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William Pavan  
Manickam Sugumaran  
Richard Swank  
Giselle Thibaudeau

**IFPCS Representative:**

Zalfa Abdel-Malek,  
*past-President PASPCR*

**Calendar of Events:**

**Sept 2006** XIII<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PASPCR to be held in Cincinnati, Ohio  
**Contact:** Zalfa Abdel-Malek  
E-mail: [abdelmza@email.uc.edu](mailto:abdelmza@email.uc.edu)

**Sept 24-27, 2006** XIII<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ESPCR to be held in Barcelona, Spain  
**Contact:** Dr. L. Montoliu  
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Web site: [www.cnb.uam.es/~espcr06/](http://www.cnb.uam.es/~espcr06/)

**2007** XIV<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PASPCR to be held in Chicago, Illinois  
**Contact:** Caroline Le Poole  
E-mail: [ilepool@lumc.edu](mailto:ilepool@lumc.edu)

**2007** XIV<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ESPCR to be held in Bari, Italy  
**Contact:** Prof. Rosa Cicero

**May 7-12, 2008** 20th meeting of the International Pigment Cell Conference (IPCC), to be held in Sapporo, Japan.  
**Contact:** Kowichi Jimbow.  
Web site: [ipcc-imrc2008@sapmed.ac.jp](mailto:ipcc-imrc2008@sapmed.ac.jp).

If you know of future meetings that you feel would be of interest to the PASPCR membership, please let us know.

The *PASPCR Newsletter* is published quarterly by the PanAmerican Society for Pigment Cell Research. All views are those of the authors. For further information or to submit articles, please contact members of the Publications Committee.

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## Corporate Sponsors

by *Raymond E. Boissy*

The PASPCR would like to acknowledge and thank our Corporate Sponsors; the list below reflects contributions over the past 2 years. Financial gifts from these sponsors have allowed our Society to increase benefits to the membership far out of proportion to the actual dues collected from members. Monies contributed by these sponsors have been used over the years to support various PASPCR functions including our Young Investigator Award program, meeting travel stipends, annual meeting expenses and this Newsletter.

### ***GOLD Corporate Patrons***

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## New Members

by *Raymond E. Boissy*

The PASPCR would like to welcome these new members to the society:

### **Tae-Jin Yoon**

Department of Dermatology  
GSNU Hospital  
Chinju, Korea

### **Bianca Jefferson**

Department of Biological Sciences  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, MS

### **Gregory Eakins**

Department of Biological Sciences  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, MS

## Visiting Scientist Award

by *Raymond E. Boissy*

The International Federation of Pigment Cell Societies sponsors an award that provides a \$3,000 stipend for a member of the PASPCR to visit the laboratory of another scientist for a period of 2-3 month. For addition information on eligibility see the IFPCS website [<http://ifpcs.med.umn.edu/travel.html>]. The 2005/6 award is still available. If you are interested please submit a statement outlining the laboratory you wish to visit, the research activity to be undertaken, a potential time frame, and the significance of the collaborative venture to:

### **Raymond E. Boissy, Ph.D.**

Secretary/Treasurer  
PanAmerican Society for Pigment Cell Research  
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231 Albert Sabin Way, ML-0592  
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Deadline for applications is:

**January 1, 2006**



**Thanks Vince and Betsy for a great conference!**

**Dear Members and Friends of the PASPCR:**

I hope you had a chance to attend the IPPC in Reston, VA. It was truly a great meeting and on behalf of the PASPCR I offer our deepest gratitude and heartiest congratulations to Vince Hearing and his team. One of the team, Betsy Hearing, played a big role in all the planning and she deserves our special recognition. What an exciting time it is for pigment cell research! Because pigment cells are involved in so many aspects of health and disease, there seems to be something for everyone as we unravel the blueprints of their existence. The Reston meeting showed just how much astounding progress we have made, and even more astounding, how incredibly far we still have to go. Whether or not you were there, in the next issue of the Newsletter there will be a synopsis for a rapid tour through the sessions. I urge you to take out a little time and read through this.

I loved all the science, but I also want to highlight two of the 'organizational' events that captured my interest. First, the International Federation of Pigment Cell Societies now boasts four rather than three sister societies because the Asian Society has become an official member. This is a very important addition because the ASPCR represents well over a billion people living in regions where skin pigmentation is of high interest indeed. There is much work to be done and it is clear they are off to a good start. We wish the ASPCR best of luck as they forge ahead to promote pigmentation research in Asia! Second, a Women and Minority Scientists Forum in pigment cell research was held during one of the lunch breaks. The issues discussed were very serious and applicable to the deepest levels of human nature. We all know the stories. Women are still not equal to men in US society and throughout the world. Minorities. If your skin is dark in a light-skinned society...well, we certainly know about that too. But scientists should be enlightened in these matters, and as such should take the lead in promoting equality and justice. That was the crux of the discussion at the forum. I am pleased

to report that at least in the PASPCR, women continue to make good progress toward that end. About 40% of the attendees were women scientists, and about 40% of the podium talks were presented by women. It isn't 50%, but it's pretty good nonetheless. Further, for the second time in a row, a woman was elected to lead the IFPCS. Dr. Zalfa Abdel-Malek, our past PASPCR president, is now president of the IFPCS. She follows Dr. Dorothy Bennett who just completed a superb term in this office.

So let us now look forward to the PASPCR meeting in September 2006 in Cincinnati where we can once again share our newest discoveries. Please vote for our new council members (you will receive the ballot shortly), keep up your membership dues, and recruit new members wherever you can!

Best wishes to all for a successful year,

***John Pawelek, PhD***

President PASPCR

October, 2005



*John Pawelek presents a check from the PASPCR to the President of the Asian Society for Pigment Cell Research, Dr. Prasad Kumarasinghe, at the 2005 IPCC.*

### **PASPCR Council Elections**

November has more than one important election. Ballots will be mailed out for the PASPCR council election to each PASPCR member. Please remember to send in your ballot as soon as possible. The following individuals have been nominated for the PASPCR Council.

James Grichnik  
Anna Luisa Kadekaro  
Sancy Leachman  
Connie Lin  
Andrzej Slominski  
Richard Spritz

Statements written by each candidate are shown below.  
**Don't forget to vote.**

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#### **James M. Grichnik M.D. Ph.D.**

Primary Academic Appointment  
Director, Melanocytic Diseases Section  
Division of Dermatology  
Associate Professor, Department of Medicine  
Secondary Academic Appointment  
Assistant Professor, Department of Cell Biology

As a clinician/researcher/educator, I feel my role in the pigment cell community is largely translational. As a dermatologist, I am faced daily by how much we still do not know. We lack definitive markers for melanoma. We do not have effective therapies for advanced disease. We have yet to identify the underlying mutations corresponding to the different nevus patterns. Yet in the research area, I am overwhelmed by the amount of information that we are garnering everyday. I believe the next decade will be a very strong one for our field and I will do what I can to promote this. I believe the melanocytic cell system is and will be further established as the model system for the study of stem cell biology and carcinogenesis.

#### **Ana Luisa Kadekaro, Ph.D.**

Research Instructor  
Department of Dermatology  
University of Cincinnati College of Medicine

Ana Luisa Kadekaro received her Ph.D. from the Department of Physiology, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 2000. She joined Dr. Abdel-Malek's laboratory as a postdoctoral fellow in 2000, where she focused her training on photobiological effects and signaling pathways of paracrine factors on human melanocytes. She was promoted in 2005 to the rank of Instructor, in the Department of Dermatology, University of Cincinnati. Her main interest is to understand the role of UV-induced cytokines as well as cell-to-cell interactions in the maintenance of skin homeostasis. In the last 3 years she has been studying the impact of different *MC1R* gene variants on human melanocytes risk for melanoma development.

#### **Sancy Leachman, Ph.D.**

Huntsman Cancer Institute  
University of Utah

Sancy Leachman is Deputy Director of the Melanoma Program and Principal Investigator of the Familial Melanoma Research Program at Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. In this capacity she leads a large, multidisciplinary team of physicians and scientist who share the common goal of understanding and treating melanoma. She collaborates widely with a diverse group of collaborators that span the spectrum from basic to social science. Her research efforts are primarily geared toward using our scientific knowledge, and human genetics in particular, to improve prevention and early detection of melanoma.

*(Nominations continued on next page)*



**Connie B. Lin, Ph.D., R. Ph.**

Research Fellow  
Skin Research Center, CPWW,  
A division of Johnson & Johnson Consumer  
Companies, Inc.

I joined Johnson & Johnson Consumer Companies after I received my Ph.D. degree in Biochemistry from Boston University School of Medicine in 1998. Since then, I hold almost seven years of working experiences in skin biology research and topical drug delivery system. I am currently a research fellow at the Skin Biology Research Center, J&J. My research interest focuses on elucidating molecular mechanisms involved in regulation of epidermal pigmentation, and on the mechanistic understanding of ethnic skin and post-inflammatory hyper-pigmentation. The second area of research is focused on the fundamental understanding of skin cancer prevention.

**Andrzej Slominski, MD, PhD**

Professor  
Director of Dermatopathology Fellowship Program  
University of Tennessee, HSC

Andrzej Slominski, MD, PhD, Professor, is the Director of the Dermatopathology Fellowship Program. Department of Pathology, University of Tennessee, HSC. He has been manuscript and editorial consultant for New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, Endocrinology, FASEB Journal, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Cancer and other specialty journals. He is a grant reviewer for NIH, NSF, Wellcome Trust Foundation, Israel Science Foundation and Austrian Science Foundation. Research interests (165 publications): neuroendocrinology of the skin, secosteroidogenesis, molecular mechanism regulating melanoma progression and differentiation, hormonal regulation of melanin pigmentation.

**Richard A. Spritz, M.D.**

Professor and Director,  
Human Medical Genetics Program  
University of Colorado Health Sciences Center at  
Fitzsimons

I am Director of the Human Medical Genetics Program and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Over the past 15 years our laboratory has investigated numerous human pigmentary disorders, including oculocutaneous albinism types 1 and 2, autosomal recessive ocular albinism, piebaldism, Waardenburg syndrome types 1 and 2, Chediak-Higashi syndrome, and Hermansky-Pudlak syndromes types 1 to 7, and homologous disorders of mouse and other species. With our many collaborators we have mapped and cloned most of these genes, characterized their mutations and genotype-phenotype correlations, and studied the functions of the corresponding proteins. For the past seven years our major efforts have focused on epidemiological and genetic analyses of generalized vitiligo, a common polygenic, multifactorial pigmentary disorder of autoimmune origin. With our collaborators, we have mapped five vitiligo/autoimmunity susceptibility genes, and identified two of these genes. We hope that these discoveries will lead to better understanding of vitiligo pathogenesis and novel approaches to disease treatment and prevention.



## Research in the PASPCR

Frank L. Meyskens

### How I Got Interested in Melanoma Research and Why I Am Doing It and What I'm Doing Now

I have been continuously involved in melanoma research since 1977. Two major career and life events were important in this development. I joined the University of Arizona as a tyro faculty member in 1977 with the intention of establishing a program in Molecular Virology. However, this was not to be. The new Chairman of Biochemistry had decided that adjunct physician-scientist appointees would not have access to graduate students and NCI funding for human virology research plummeted from 8% to 2% of the budget (This was the year NCI declared, in all its wisdom, that viruses had nothing to do with human cancer. Of course the following year HTLV was isolated and soon thereafter the HPV and Hepatitis B and C stories emerged!)

On my way to Tucson I visited my folks in San Francisco and just before we left, my father asked me to look into his eyes as he had a "spot" there. Indeed, it was an iris melanoma, and I delayed my departure several days to get him dispositioned. Although he lost his eye, he is happily still alive and doing well. Upon arriving in Tucson, I learned that no one was particularly interested in melanoma patients, and so it began.

Shortly thereafter I met Joe Bagnara and Mac Hadley who got me interested in pigment cell biology and all its wonders. In 1978 I went to the IFPCS meeting in Sedai, had an unexpected two hour talk with the late Mako Seiji, and I was hooked. An important connection was with Bryan Fuller, who was then a postdoc with Mac Hadley, and we co-published a widely cited paper on retinoids and human melanoma (1). A real highlight was assisting in the 13<sup>th</sup> IPCC (the IFPCS) held in Tucson in 1986. From 1978 – 1989 my lab explored a number of avenues that led

to several large clinical trials with retinoids and many human cancers, including melanoma (2). Along the way I met Jeff Trent, who was a graduate student and then postdoc and faculty member. This led to several papers most notably the characterization of specific chromosomal abnormalities in melanoma (3) and their importance in predicting clinical outcome (4). Zelfa Abdel-Malek was also a prominent and productive graduate student with Mac Hadley during this time (5). We also did a lot of work in human melanoma stem cells (6,7), but alas we were ahead of our time.

In 1989 I left the University of Arizona for U.C. Irvine to establish a new Cancer Center. The first seven years were very hard as I also served as Hematology/Oncology Chief and Director of Oncology Services. My lab efforts (but not my clinical research activities) went into eclipse. U.C. Irvine was one of the clinical units of the Carotene and Retinal Efficacy Trial (CARET). Shockingly, B-carotene supplementation resulted in more lung cancer in smokers rather than fewer (8); I wanted to know why. For a variety of reasons I postulated that B-carotene was functioning as a pro-oxidant and this led to a six month sabbatical in the laboratory of Helmue Sies in Dusseldorf. He was (and still is) one of the top five redox chemists in the world.

Working in a basic chemistry lab (and his group was too large to count) was a thoroughly humbling experience (fortunately a young faculty member Willi Stahl took pity on me and took me under his wing). I learned a lot and near the end of my time there I began thinking about melanoma again. Upon returning home we did some initial experiments and reported them at the 16<sup>th</sup> IPCC in 1996 in Anaheim (9), of which I was co-chair. This has gradually led to the building of a Program at UC Irvine that might be called "Redox abnormalities and regulation in human melanoma." Shortly thereafter I had the great fortune of meeting Dr. Pat Farmer, an electrochemist in our Department of Chemistry, and we began a series of papers that have explored the mechanistic basis of our biological

findings (10-12). The core group also consists of a surgical oncologist (Jin Jakowatz and Director of the Melanoma Center), dermatologic oncologist (Ken Linden), clinical/molecular pharmacologist (John Fruehauf), and a molecular biologist (Sun Yang).

We have proposed a major new paradigm for the pathogenesis of human melanoma which has substantial implications for thinking about the etiology, prevention, and treatment of melanoma (13). This work has led to the publication of many papers in several different key literatures and the development of potentially new therapies for melanoma (14-16). One unexpected "complication" of this experience has been the response in manuscript and grant reviews. Overall the overlap of chemistry and molecular biology is small, with most in the latter field intimidated by the science in the former. We have taken the strategy of developing "internal tutorials" but that has not always been successful in helping our critics to "see the light."

I am often asked, "How do you fund your work?" I have been very fortunate in having my "prevention" researched funded continuously by NIH since 1978. Funding of the melanoma research work has been much more varied. Almost all the clinical work has been done within the infrastructure of the two cancer centers of which I have been associated. Laboratory research has been funded more or less in the following manner:

1977 – 1980: Startup funds from University of Arizona  
 1979 – 1984: Project within a Program Project (S. Salmon P.I.)  
 1983 – 1986: ACS RO-1 (P.I.)  
 1986 – 1989: Grateful patients  
 1989 – 1995: Startup funds from U.C. Irvine  
 1995 – 2005: Grateful patients and Targeted Family Foundations

In 2005 I have submitted my first competitive grant as a Project within a SPORE and a RCDA-like

proposal to a competitive foundation. Since I had not written a lab-based "RO-1" in over 20 years, I was surprised by how much the "rules" had changed. A recent experience on an NIH study section further confirmed my suspicions that mechanisms have become more important than ideas. We are deeply committed to this area of research though so we will continue our work as well as we can in this tough funding environment (almost as bad as the early '80's).

I would be remiss if I did not mention at least two other people: Bob Shahandeh who has been our lead technician at UCI for the past 5 years (he just went to graduate school, and we are trying to recover from that) and most importantly Julie Buckmeier who was my senior technician (and colleague) from 1982 to 2001 and returned to Tucson that year from personal reasons. I doubt if my lab would be where we are today without her imaginary spirit, steady hands, and quiet smile.

## References

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*Zalfa Abdel-Malek and Frank Meyskens at the 2004 PASPCR Annual Meeting, held in Irvine, CA.*

## Positions Wanted/Available

Postings for **Positions Available** will be open to all individuals and institutions so long as the position is related to pigment cell research. Postings for **Positions Wanted** will be open only to members of the PanAmerican Society for Pigment Cell Research or its sister societies (JSPCR and ESPCR). Send postings to Bill Oetting at [bill@lenti.med.umn.edu](mailto:bill@lenti.med.umn.edu). Please provide an expiration date for any submitted postings. Final decisions will be made by the Publications Committee of the PASPCR.

### Postdoctoral Position

Postdoctoral Position in the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, UC Irvine is immediately available to study the signal transduction pathways in human melanoma for regulation of cell proliferation, differentiation and apoptosis. Prior knowledge or interest in redox metabolism would be useful.

A highly motivated individual with a background in molecular and cell biology is desired. All necessary training will be provided.

Please send your curriculum vitae, and contact information for at least two references to :

#### Frank Meyskens, M.D.

Professor of Medicine and Biological Chemistry  
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Senior Associate Dean, Health Sciences College of Medicine  
University of California Irvine Medical Center  
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### Postdoctoral Position

A postdoctoral position available in the laboratory of Dr. Andrew Aplin in the Center for Cell Biology and Cancer Research at Albany Medical College, NY. Research will focus on the critical signaling proteins involved in anchorage-dependent cell growth of melanocytes and that may be aberrantly

regulated in melanoma cells. Further details and recent publications can be obtained at <http://www.amc.edu/academic/research/CBCResearcher.cfm?ID=170>

Albany Medical College is located in the scenic Hudson River Valley, offering affordable housing, easy commutes and quick access to cultural (e.g., Saratoga, 45 min; Tanglewood, 1 hr), and outdoor activities (Adirondack State Park, 2 hr).

Candidates with a recent PhD or MD/PhD with a strong background in molecular and cellular biology are encouraged to apply. Excellent financial compensation and benefits are provided. Please submit a resume and the names of references to:

Andrew E. Aplin, Ph.D.  
Center for Cell Biology & Cancer Research  
Albany Medical College,  
47 New Scotland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12208  
Email: [aplina@mail.amc.edu](mailto:aplina@mail.amc.edu)

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### Postdoctoral Position

A Postdoctoral Position is available to study the role of UV radiation in the development of primary melanoma. The project will use transgenic and pigment cell mutant mice and cell cultures to study molecular mechanisms of melanoma initiation and progression. A strong background in pigment cell biology, cellular mechanisms of toxicology, carcinogenesis, or molecular biology is desired. Send curriculum vitae, names of 3 references, and a brief summary of research interests to:

Faith M. Strickland, Ph.D.  
Dermatology Research 4D49  
Henry Ford Hospital  
One Ford Place  
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Phone: 313-874-3385  
FAX: 313-874-3770.

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**Postdoctoral Research Associate**

Fox Chase Cancer Center.

Two NIH-funded postdoctoral positions are available to work on the development of neural crest-derived melanocytes and enteric neurons in mice. We are interested in the signals required for proper migration and differentiation of these lineages during mouse embryogenesis and use various genetic manipulation techniques and existing mutants for our studies. Fox Chase Cancer offers competitive salaries to its postdocs and was recently named one of the best places to work for Postdocs (<http://www.fccc.edu/news/2003/Best-Places-for->

Postdocs-02-20-2003.html). Candidates with a recent PhD or MD/PhD with strong background in molecular biology, genetics or developmental biology are encouraged to apply. Please submit CV, and names of 3 references to:

Dr. Myung K. Shin  
Program in Cellular and Developmental  
Biology  
Fox Chase Cancer Center  
Philadelphia, PA 19111, USA  
Email: MK\_Shin@fccc.edu

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