

# THE PGA POST

May 2012

Volume 3, Issue 2



**DANA-FARBER  
POSTDOC AND  
GRADUATE STUDENT  
ASSOCIATION**

## Inside this issue:

Mentor-of-the-Year Award	1
IEP Updates	1
An Interview with Dr. Benjamin Haibe-Kains	2
Science App Fever	3
K Series Awards	3
Curiosity Corner	4
PGA Calendar	4
Note from Jen!	4
Tiramisu Recipe	4

## Mentor-of-the-Year Award

*Good mentors are able to share life experiences and wisdom, as well as technical expertise. They are good listeners, good observers, and good problem-solvers. They make an effort to know, accept and respect the goals and interests of their mentee, and establish a nurturing environment in which the mentee's accomplishment is limited only by the extent of his or her talent. Above all, **effective mentorship advances the professional success of the mentee** (Entering Mentoring, 2005; Rollins 2010).*

Exceptional mentoring de-

serves recognition, and the PGSAO is pleased to announce the call for nominations for the first annual **DFCI Postdoc and Graduate Student Mentor-of-the-Year Award**, which will be announced in September 2012. The DFCI faculty member chosen will receive \$500.

We encourage you to submit a nomination online by writing about why you think your mentor should receive the award. Describe their qualifications and provide examples of how they have had a positive impact on advancing your research

career. Points to consider are quality of communication, networking opportunities and career guidance. Note that your nominee must be a current DFCI faculty member. Also, you can only nominate one individual, one time. Nomination statements can be submitted online by going to the PGSAO intranet page and clicking on "Mentor-of-the-Year Award" on the left hand side. Nominations should be submitted not later than **Wednesday, August 15, 2012.**

We invite you to nominate your favorite mentor today!

## IEP Updates

With regard to the MassBioEd Industry Exploration Program (IEP) supported by the PGSAO, the good news is that if you have not yet signed up for the program, you can still do so! MassBioEd was unable to get all companies to agree to the April 27<sup>th</sup> visitation date. The new model is for each company to set their own visitation date, which will be sometime this spring or early summer.

Companies are now in the process of reviewing the biosketches that postdocs have uploaded to the IEP site and selecting specific individuals to invite. If you are interested in participating and missed the original deadline, you should sign up now (see <http://dfcionline.org/departments/postdoc/iep/default.aspx>). MassBioEd is planning additional company visits in the fall.

## PGA Bake-off Winner



*See pg. 4 for Junko's tiramisu recipe!*

## Where @ DFCI?



Do you know where this is?  
Send your answer to  
[dfci\\_pgapost@dfci.harvard.edu](mailto:dfci_pgapost@dfci.harvard.edu)  
The first 2 people with the correct answer will receive a \$5 gift card!

# Transitioning to Independence — Dr. Benjamin Haibe-Kains



*Ben is currently Director of the Bioinformatics and Computational group in the Institut de Recherches Cliniques de Montréal. He was a postdoc in John Quackenbush's lab in the DFCI Department of Bio-statistics. While at DFCI, he was an active PGA member, and was co-chair of the association; here he shares his experience with DFCI and the PGA.*

**Tell us a little bit about yourself, where are you from? Where did you obtain your PhD?**

I was born in Brussels, Belgium. I graduated from the Université Libre de Bruxelles with a degree in computer science. I was not the most brilliant student but I was very consistent and managed to get good grades, which helped me in my career progression.

**Why did you choose a career in science?**

I had the chance to get my graduate training in the

laboratory of Prof. Gianluca Bontempi; he is an expert in Machine Learning and one of the best supervisors I have ever had. I built a small robot in Lego Mindstorms (I am not kidding!) and wrote a program so that it could learn to properly use its sensors and motors to find a light source. It was a lot of fun, and it got me interested in data analysis. However, Professor Bontempi did not encourage me to pursue a career in artificial intelligence; instead he directed me to the field of Bioinformatics, as a promising field in which to apply machine learning and data mining.

**What brought you to DFCI and how would you say your experience at DFCI influenced your career?**

I decided to join John Quackenbush's lab at the DFCI as it seemed to be the best environment for working collaboratively with experienced bioinformaticians, while also offering opportunities to interact closely with biologists and clinicians; of course, John's excellent reputation and his impressive publication record were major factors in my decision to come here.

In terms of my career, working at DFCI gave me the confidence to publish in the best journals and taught me how to deal with my own collaborations.

**What would you do differently if you were starting your postdoc at DFCI all over again?**

When I started my position at DFCI, I continued to work on many of my PhD projects, which delayed the start of my new projects. If I were to do it all over again, I would focus directly on the novel, more exciting and challenging topics. I realize in retrospect that my postdoc was for learning new things, not for staying in my comfort zone!

**Would you like to share any scientific "Aha" moments with us?**

My "Aha" moment was when I realized the importance of molecular subtypes in breast cancer for prognostication: the idea of identifying a prognostic gene signature in each subtype separately, then combining them in an elegant statistical framework sounded pretty cool in theory, but it was even more exciting when it actually worked! I called it the GENIUS model (Gene Expression prognostic Index Using Subtypes).

**Which experiences from your postdoc training (or time with the PGA?) would you consider to be the most valuable in preparing you for your current position?**

Above all was learning to

communicate well, and not to be afraid to contact pioneers in the field. After all, most investigators are looking for someone, either as a faculty member for their institution, or as a prospective postdoc or graduate student. Working at DFCI and being part of the PGA committee gave me the confidence to go to interviews and to sell myself more effectively.

**What is it like to work at your current job? Any surprising differences that you were not prepared for?**

I had to face new challenges: hire lab members, manage them, write grant proposals, and also teach. I hope that I will learn how to do all of these things with time. I was definitely not prepared to be considered as the director of a lab; it feels strange to be on the other side, but it is also very exciting.

**What do you think is the most important/useful resource provided by the PGA that most postdocs and/or students may not know about?**

I found Sonal's workshops and the numerous seminars on career development to be invaluable, and I encourage all postdocs to attend them. In my opinion, they will enhance your postdoc experience and also better prepare you for your next position.

## BIKE TOUR to Walden Pond on June 16!

**Destination:** Walden Pond near Concord (one way: ~22 miles, 2–2.5 hours)

**Date & Time:** Saturday, June 16 from 11 AM (starting at Dana) until about 6-7 PM

**Cost:** free (unless you need to rent a bicycle, which is about \$35)

To register, email Jennifer Molina ([jennifer\\_molina@dfci.harvard.edu](mailto:jennifer_molina@dfci.harvard.edu)) by **June 14**



## Science App Fever

We've all played Angry Birds on an iPhone during the incubation period of an experiment. But do you know that there are also apps that can increase your productivity in the lab? Here are two popular examples.

### App#1



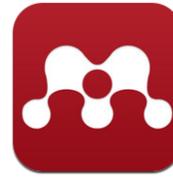
**Name:** Evernote  
**Price:** Free  
**Size:** 19MB  
**Company:** Evernote Corp.

**Function:** Helps you document thoughts and ideas in the forms of text, audio recordings and pictures, then compiles each thread into a complete story.

**Pros:** By stitching relevant information together, Evernote surpasses the built-in Notes and Voice functions on an iPhone. Evernote instantly synchronizes your input with online storage and can be shared across multiple social networks. Overall, a very useful tool for seminars and scientific conferences!

**Cons:** Building your personal notebook within Evernote requires some effort on your part. Also, you need to install the Evernote program on your computer to maximize the benefits. Lastly, the online storage allowance for Evernote is only 60MB, although it can be expanded by updating to a paid membership.

### App#2



**Name:** Mendeley  
**Price:** Free  
**Size:** 2.2MB  
**Company:** Mendeley Ltd.

**Function:** A reference organizer and accessory to Mendeley Desktop, which automatically synchronizes your references to a web space linked to your Mendeley account.

**Pros:** It is free, and does not take up much disk space. Most importantly, it enables you to access your online reference database while away from your computer, so it is especially

convenient for existing users of Mendeley Desktop.

**Cons:** The app itself has limited functions without your own online database. Secondly, the whole library of PDF files in your online collection may take quite some space and time to download. Finally, a free account with Mendeley only allows 500MB of online space, but you can upgrade to a paid membership, which offers larger storage capacity.

As we continue to research popular science apps, you can find more reviews on our blog (<http://scienceappfever.blogspot.com>). We welcome your comments and suggestions for new apps to investigate.

## NIH Mentored Career Development Awards (K Series)

Do you see yourself becoming an independent researcher with your own R01 grant? The NIH mentored Career Development (K) awards help facilitate the transition from mentored postdoc to independence by providing support for research and career training for about 3 to 5 years.

**Find the right award:** There are a number of K awards that are tailored to laboratory-based research or biostatistical/epidemiological research. If you have already had at least 2 years postdoc experience, consider the K01 (mentored research) or K25 (mentored quantitative re-

search) award. If your mentored training is nearly complete (you have completed 4+ years of postdoc work), consider the K99/R00 (Pathway to Independence) award. It supports 2 more years as mentored postdoc, then contingent upon approval and an accepted tenure track position, 3 years as independent faculty. The K22 (Career Transition (unmentored) award) allows 8 years post advanced degree experience. Specifics are available at <http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm>; contact the scientific and grants management officers at the appropriate NIH institute for

guidance and support during the application process.

**Make a timetable:** Plan for at least 7 months before the deadline to write, review and revise. Upcoming standard deadlines are October 12, 2012 and February 12, 2013. See <http://www.mededmentoring.org/proginfo.asp?progid=25&source=newsletter> for a potential timetable. **State how this award will lead you to write a successful R01**, which you will plan to write during the award period.

**Focus your application on: 1) your background, 2) research plan, 3) ca-**

**reer development plan** – state why you need additional training, particularly hands-on, interactive short courses and workshops and how you will assess your progress, and 4) **mentors** – explain how you will have an experienced and respected primary mentor along with a multidisciplinary mentoring and consulting team.

**Review your application:** read the guidelines for reviewers, watch a mock review and have people with different backgrounds read your application. See <http://accelerate.ucsf.edu/training/K-grant-writing> for a detailed overview.

### Editorial Team

Sophia Adamia  
Xuguang Chen  
Arun Pores Fernando  
Shan Lou

Monica Ter-Minassian  
Aaron Thorner  
Hilary Wade  
Jing Zhang

Special thanks to Jennifer Molina and Sonal Jhaveri. If you are interested in contributing to the PGA Newsletter, email us at [dfci\\_pgapost@dfci.harvard.edu](mailto:dfci_pgapost@dfci.harvard.edu). Comments and suggestions are also welcomed!

## Curiosity Corner



**Why do zebras have such a distinct striped pattern?** A group of Hungarian scientists suggests that the pattern might help them avoid blood-sucking horseflies, which are strongly attracted to linearly polarized light. The light and dark stripes of a zebra's coat disrupt the polarization of light and reduce this attraction. The group also demonstrated that horse models with a zebra pattern attracted far fewer horseflies compared to models with pure colors. Seems like the zebra pattern is not just a fashion style after all. (*J Exp Biol*, 2012, 215(Pt 5):736)

**Traditional yeasts make the best wine!** Italian scientists recently discovered 209 new strains of *Saccharomyces* yeast from samples isolated in traditional wineries of Sicily. A number of these strains outperform the more widely used industrial strains in fermentation tests. Most notably, wine made with two of the newly discovered strains tastes better than that made with a commercial strain. No wonder the best wines are often found in small family wineries instead of liquor stores. (*PLoS One*, 2012, 7(2):e30428)



### Note from Jen!

Have a question for the PGA? Email [jennifer\\_molina@dfci.harvard.edu](mailto:jennifer_molina@dfci.harvard.edu)

We are pleased to announce the first annual DFCI postdoctoral fellow survey. This survey is part of Dana-Farber's commitment to foster an excellent research training environment and career development opportunity for all postdocs. The overall goal is to identify opportunities for enhancing the postdoctoral experience at Dana-Farber.

It will be 15 minutes well spent. Our goal is to have every postdoc participate in this survey. Everyone who has completed the survey can enter their name in a drawing to win a new Apple iPad (16GB with Wi-Fi). The survey will open in May and stay open until mid-June. The drawing will be held and the winner announced once the survey has closed. Stay tuned for an email announcement which will include the link where you can complete the survey.

We are always receptive to feedback throughout the year, not only when surveys are conducted! You can also give us your comments and suggestions for improvement at any other time during the year – and submit these anonymously on our suggestions form (<http://dfcionline.org/departments/postdoc/feedback/feedback.aspx>) on our intranet site.

Give 15 minutes of your time and get the chance to win an iPad!

*Have a poster? Consider donating it to the PGSAO!*

## PGA Calendar

**June 7, 2012** – How To Be an Effective Mentee, by Melissa Brodrick, HMS Ombudsperson

**Time:** 2:30 – 4:00 PM

**Location:** Smith 308/309

**June 27, 2012** – Lunch with the Leaders, featuring Dr. Matthew Meyerson

**Time:** 12:00 - 1:30 PM

**Location:** Benaceraff Reading Room

**June to August, 2012** – 5 Session Workshop on Manuscript Writing with Dr. Sonal Jhaveri

**Dates:** June 28, July 12, July 26, August 2 & August 9 (all Thursdays)

**Time:** 2:00 – 3:30 PM

**Locations:** SM 308/309, JF 836 A/B & YCC 307

Events subject to change. Visit <http://dfcionline.org/departments/postdoc/events/default.aspx> for updates.

## Winning Bake-off Recipe

On March 19, the PGA held a competition to determine the best baker among the postdocs and grad students. Junko Odajima, a postdoc in the Cancer Biology department, was crowned the winner. Here is her amazing tiramisu recipe:

### Tiramisu

2 packages of lady finger cookies  
(suggestion: Alessi's Biscotti Savoiardi, available at Shaw's)  
2 cups of cold strong coffee  
1/3 cup of any coffee liqueur  
6 large eggs (yolks and whites separated)  
3/4 cup of sugar (adjust to your taste)  
1 tsp of vanilla extract (added to coffee or mascarpone mix)  
1 lb of mascarpone cheese  
1/3 cup of cocoa powder  
Optional: 1/4 cup of finely chopped semisweet chocolate

1. Beat the egg yolks with 1/2 of the sugar until the mix is thick enough to form a long ribbon when you lift the beaters. Add the mascarpone cheese and beat for 2-3 more minutes. Set aside.
2. Beat the egg whites, adding the remaining sugar a little at a time until peaks form (about 4 minutes).
3. Gently fold the egg whites in with the mascarpone cheese mixture until it is all the same color. (Optional: Gently add the finely chopped semisweet chocolate and fold it into the mix.)
4. Mix the cold coffee and the liqueur in a large bowl. Dip the cookies in the coffee mix. *\*\*Important: You want them to be moist on the outside but still crunchy inside!!*
5. In a 9x17 baking dish, assemble the dessert. Layer the bottom of the pan with the soaked cookies. Top with a layer of the mascarpone mix. Repeat the procedure to make one more layer.
6. Using a flour sifter or a tea strainer, sprinkle a thin layer of a cocoa powder over the top of the tiramisu.
7. Refrigerate tiramisu for at least 5 hours or overnight.