

New Grants Received in '09-'10

Seven new National Institutes of Health (NIH) awards have been received by RIA scientists since the last RIA Report. Three of the awards were made with support through funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

In August 2009, **Dr. Jerry B. Richards** received a \$554,750 award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) -- including support through funds provided by ARRA -- to extend his investigation of impulsivity as a predisposing factor for drug abuse.

In this investigation, Dr. Richards said he and his staff are developing and using laboratory-based, behavioral measures of impulsivity to study the relationship between impulsive processes and drug abuse. "We are examining the strength of the association between cocaine self-administration in animals and three behavioral processes we have identified as underlying the occurrence of impulsive behaviors. This process involves investigating the acquisition, extinction and cue-induced reinstatement of drug-taking, as well as the escalation of drug-intake."

This research is expected to provide important new information concerning putative animal models of impulsivity and the ability of these models to predict cocaine self-administration in humans.

Also in August, **Dr. John W. Welte** received a \$3 million award from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) to support a survey of adult gambling and substance involvement in the U.S. The investigation will include census data about the neighborhoods in which the study participants live, the distances from their homes to gambling venues, and information about gambling laws in the states in which they reside.

"Since the National Survey of the Co-occurrence of Gambling and Substance Use in the U.S. was conducted in 2000," Welte explained, "there has been an increase in the public profile and availability of gambling in this country. The data from the newly-funded study will be combined with the data from the 2000 survey for the purpose of analyzing trends in gambling in the U.S. over

the last decade among adults and in relevant sub-groups of the population."

His research team includes **Drs. Grace Barnes** and **Marie C. O. Tidwell** of RIA, and **Dr. William Wiczorek** of Buffalo State College.

In September 2009, **Dr. Alexis C. Thompson** and colleagues received a Multiple Principal Investigator award from NIDA to study the protein composition of plasma and brain tissue samples from animal models of cocaine dependence, withdrawal, and stress-induced relapse. RIA's portion of the award totals \$183,280.

"The goal of the study," according to Dr. Thompson, "is to identify biomarkers of cocaine history and vulnerability to stress-induced reinstatement of cocaine-induced behavior."

Her colleagues are **Dr. Robert Straubinger** and **Dr. Jun Qu**, both of UB's School of Pharmacy.

Also in September, **Dr. Robert G. Rychtarik** received a \$1 million award from NIAAA -- including support through funds provided by ARRA -- to develop a web-delivered coping skills training program for women with alcoholic partners.

The protocol employs an iterative, user-centered web site development process to develop and preliminarily test the Internet-based Coping Skills Training Program. Results will provide the

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Director's Message



We are excited to describe in this *RIA Report* six new research initiatives that have been funded since our last *Report*. In the first, **Dr. Jerry Richards** is using laboratory-based behavioral measures to study impulsive processes

and drug abuse. In the second, **Dr. John Welte** is conducting a national survey of adult gambling and substance involvement. In the third, **Dr. Alexis Thompson's** project will be identifying biomarkers of cocaine history and vulnerability to stress-induced reinstatement of cocaine-induced behavior, using an animal model. **Dr. Robert Rychtarik**, in the fourth project, is developing and evaluating a web-delivered coping skills training program for women with alcoholic partners. In the fifth, **Dr. Paul Stasiewicz** will be investigating the processes of change that operate within the successful use of cognitive-behavioral therapy in alcoholism treatment. Finally, in the sixth, **Dr. Maria Testa** will be studying young men's alcohol use and the part it plays in the perpetration of sexual aggression. Details on these projects, several of which are supported by funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), are provided elsewhere in this *Report*.

Our Spring Seminar Series, completed this past May, featured presentations by **Drs. Paul Stasiewicz, Carol Prescott, and Thomas Brandon**. We were pleased to have hosted these very distinguished speakers. Our Fall Seminar Series featured presentations by **Drs. Paul Vezina and Jennifer Read**. As always, these seminar presentations are free and open to the public, and information on them is available at our website (ria.buffalo.edu/events/index.html).

Since our last *Report*, we also held both our 2009 and our 2010 annual Employee

(cont'd on p. 2, col. 1)

Director's Message (cont'd from p. 1)

Recognition Gatherings, when we take the opportunity to honor employees who have reached milestone points of service at RIA. Their names are listed elsewhere in the Report. Congratulations to them all!

On another front, we were delighted to have had our NIAAA-funded postdoctoral training program on alcohol etiology and treatment renewed for its third five-year period. We've also had some changes in our roster of post-doctoral fellows. Recently graduating from the program was Dr. Eric Truxell, who is continuing his research endeavors at Binghamton University. Meanwhile, we are pleased to have welcomed two new fellows into the program: Drs. Robert Schlauch and Ash Levitt. A warm welcome to them both!

Several retirements have occurred over the past year. In this regard, we bid fond farewell and best wishes to several retiring colleagues: Pat Aughtry, Peggy Birke, Ed Ciszek, Iris McLaughlin, Bonnie Morgante, and Dennis Villagomez. In addition, two of our distinguished senior scientists, Drs. Grace Barnes and John Welte, have retired from New York State service, but happily will be continuing with us on a part-time basis. We wish them all the best in their retirement, or semi-retirement, activities.

Finally, all of us at RIA were saddened by the sudden passing last April of Larry Jagodzinski, who for many years had served as nurse at RIA's Clinical Research Center. Our deepest condolences are with his family.

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Gerard J. Connors, PhDDirector
Kathleen M. Weaver Writer/Editor
Robert MarczyńskiGraphic Designer
Subscriptions are free.
Email: newsletters @ria.buffalo.edu
We welcome comments from readers.
Research Institute on Addictions
State University of New York at Buffalo
1021 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203-1016
Phone 716.887.2566 Fax 716.887.2252
http://www.ria.buffalo.edu

We Applaud a Cumulative 162 Years of Service to RIA!

Staff retirements and transitions, we bid adieu but not good-by



L-R: Dr. Grace Barnes, Iris McLaughlin, Dr. John Welte and Patricia Aughtry received awards for their many years of service.

Beginning late in 2009, familiar faces retired from their positions at the Institute. Those 'faces' included Ed Ciszek and Peggy Birke, who both retired in November after 10 years of service. Ed's role as library assistant was to manage circulation in RIA's library. Peggy was a project assistant, most recently affiliated with Dr. Rina Eiden's research team. Bonnie Morgante retired in December following a career as administrative assistant to multiple principal investigators and research teams as well as previously contributing several years to the computer department's help desk. She retired after 14 years at RIA and another 14 years in the medical chemistry department of the School of Pharmacy.

Bonnie Morgante is shown with Dr. Gerard Connors following receipt of her award for service to RIA.



In June of this year, Dennis Villagomez, plant utilities assistant, retired after two years at RIA. He had previously worked at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and the West Seneca Developmental Center.

Most recently, four staff members announced their retirements as of September 2010. Iris McLaughlin, research scientist I and project coordinator for Dr. Kenneth E. Leonard, retired after a total of 35 years at RIA. Her career included 31 years of NYS service and four additional years of service as a CETA employee.

Also in September, Patricia Aughtry, addictions counselor/research assistant retired after 20 years of NYS service at RIA. Most recently she split her time between Dr. Kimberly S. Walitzer's and Dr. Robert G. Rychtarik's research teams. Pat began her career in RIA's Clinical Research Center when it opened in 1990.

Finally, we bid adieu but not good-by to two senior research scientists who individually and collectively have contributed much to the body of knowledge about adolescent substance use, delinquent behavior, parenting, gambling, population surveys and the epidemiology of gambling and substance use: Dr. Grace M. Barnes and Dr. John W. Welte.

Dr. Grace M. Barnes is retiring after 39 years of service to RIA. She was one of the first two employees to staff the Institute and worked with RIA's founding director, Dr. Cedric M. Smith. Grace will continue her research on a part-time basis.

Dr. John W. Welte has a total of 34 years at RIA, 32 of them with NYS and two additional years with the Research Foundation. John turned his attention to gambling research in 1998 and with Grace as his co-investigator, initiated a national gambling study that not only contributed to scientific knowledge but has consistently informed public policy debates and decisions. John as well will be continuing his research at RIA on a part-time basis.

Staff Volunteerism

RIA staff frequently have ideas for ways to contribute to the greater Buffalo community. Some of the volunteer efforts are described below.

School Supplies

In August 2009 and 2010, RIA became a downtown site for the UB Office of Community Relations drive for children's school supplies. A donation box was made available to staff in the first floor mailroom to collect notebooks, pens, pencils, calculators and other school supplies.

Extreme Food Drive Challenge

In November 2009, Gyna Meneses led a food collection drive on behalf of the International Preparatory School at Grover Cleveland High School, the Upward Bound program at D'Youville College and the Buffalo City Mission.

ADDS Casa Di Vita

During November and December, 2009, Joan Duquette once again spearheaded the holiday collection of clothes, personal items and holiday gifts for Casa Di Vita. The halfway house and substance abuse treatment facility for women is operated by Alcohol and Drug Dependency Services (ADDS). At the time, the facility housed 54 women. Gifts were collected for their children as well. Joan's elves included Carol Marx, Gyna Meneses, Aileen Tuohy and Cindy Warthling.

Hospice Spring Bouquet Sale

Lastly, in February 2010, Kathleen Weaver led RIA's participation in the 24th Annual Spring Hospice Bouquet Sale. Staff purchased bouquets in tribute to family and friends who had been assisted by Hospice.



L-R: Carrie Pengelly, Kimberly Larkin and Kathleen Weaver admire the Hospice bouquets.

Employee Recognition Gatherings

RIA staff are formally recognized and service anniversaries are celebrated once each year. A reception is held and Dr. Connors' acknowledges the skills and commitment of the staff for the part they play in the many accomplishments of the Institute. The names of the staff honored at the 2009 and 2010 events are provided below.

October 29, 2009

RIA's 11th Annual Employee Recognition

Five Years of Service

Michele Andrzejewski	Linda King
William Duquette	Dorothy Lutgen
Kathryn Hausknecht	Jerry Richards
Amy Hequembourg	Jennifer Smith
Lynn Homish	Paula Vincent

10 Years of Service

Jennifer Adams	Samir Haj-Dahmane
Margaret Birke	Roh-Yu Shen
Edward Cizek	Elizabeth Young

15 Years of Service

Joan Duquette	Linda Ritzman
---------------	---------------

20 Years of Service

Maria Testa	25 Years of Service
	Raymond Wagner



2009 Employee Recognition, top to bottom include three of the honorees with Dr. Connors, Joan Duquette, Linda Ritzman and Raymond Wagner.

October 28, 2010

RIA's 12th Annual Employee Recognition

Five Years of Service

Rebecca Houston	Laura Slawiak
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10 Years of Service

Christopher Barrick	Jean Finn
Tara Chiaravalle	Carrie Pengelly
CeCe Duerr	Cynthia Warthling

15 Years of Service

George Gogos	Mary Monin
Joseph Hoffman	Kathleen Skibicki

20 Years of Service

Kaye Chapman-Johnson	James Krygier
Darlene Cutonilli	Carol Marx
Kurt Dermen	Eugenia Riollano
Mark Duerr	



2010 Employee Recognition pics include Tara Chiaravalle and Kaye Chapman-Johnson (top), Mary Monin and Carol Marx (middle) and James Krygier (bottom).



Latest Scientific Presentations

May

Association for Psychological Science, Boston, MA

- Creager, W. R., Houston, R. J., & Ostrov, J. M.
Differential associations between functions of aggression and ECF performance in binge drinkers.
- Panczakiewicz, A. L., Houston, R. J., & Ostrov, J. M.
Forms and functions of aggression predict different aspects of borderline personality features.
- Smith M. M., Houston, R. J., Dearing, R. L., Connors, G. J., & Homish, G. G.
High vs. low volume drinkers: Differences in impulsivity in response to CBT.

Coalition Against Gambling in New York, Albany, NY

Welte, J. W.
Results from two national surveys of gambling.

Neurofest 2010, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, NY

- Shen, R. Y.
Persistent changes in the activity and synaptic transmission of midbrain dopamine neurons after prenatal ethanol exposure and the functional implications.

June

College on Problems on Drug Dependence Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

- Barrick, C., & Homish, G. G.
A comparison of two methods of technology transfer for substance abuse clinicians.

International Behavioral Neuroscience Conference, Vallasimius, Sardinia, Italy

- Eiden, R. D.
Maternal cocaine use and mother-infant interactions: Direct and moderated effects.

Postdoc Research Symposium, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

- Finger, B., & Lyons-Ruth, K.
Hostile-helpless states of mind: Concurrent relations to borderline and antisocial features.

Research Society on Alcoholism, San Antonio, TX

- Bauer, L. O., & Houston, R. J.
Body mass, impulsivity, and substance dependence risk.

- Collins, R. L., Vincent, P. C., Wilson, S. D., & Smith, J. M.
Cross-sectional versus episode-specific motives for alcohol use among regular malt liquor drinkers.

- Collins, R. L., Vincent, P. C., Dermen, K. H., Vetter, C. J., Wilson, S. D., & Smith, J. M.

A daily process approach to evaluating three brief motivation-based interventions to reduce young adults' alcohol use. In A. Cohn (Chair), *Advancing alcohol treatment outcomes using daily data collection approaches: Current applications, methodological considerations and future directions.*

- Dearing, R. L., Houston, R. J., Homish, G. G., & Connors, G. J.

Updates on impulse control as a mechanism of behavior change in alcohol treatment.

- Derrick, J. L., & Leonard, K. E.

Neuroticism and tension-reduction expectancies moderate the relationship between negative life events and alcohol use.

- Hequembourg, A., Livingston, J. A., & Jefferson, J.
Adult sexual victimization among sexual minority men and women: The role of alcohol.

- Homish, G. G., & Leonard, K. E.
Longitudinal predictors of drinking, heavy drinking, and alcohol problems: The role of social factors.

- Homish, G. G., Smith, P., Leonard, K. E., Cornelius, J. R., & Collins, R. L.

Alcohol use and smoking in the military: Findings from National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC).

- Leonard, K. E., Homish, G. G., Quigley, B. M., & Kachadourian, L. K.

Alcohol, alcohol expectancies, and hostility as longitudinal predictors of alcohol-related aggression.

- Livingston, J. A., Testa, M., Hequembourg, A., & Windle, M.

Alcohol involvement in first sexual intercourse experiences of adolescent girls.

- Maisto, S. A., Connors, G. J., Dermen, K. H., Duerr, M. R., Dearing, R. L., & Prince, M. A.

Therapeutic alliance as a mechanism of change in alcoholism treatment.

- Mendoza, N. S., & Dearing, R. L.
Help-seeking motivation: Modeling locus of causality and gender.

- Mendoza, N. S., Derrick, J. L., & Stasiewicz, P. R.
Perceived and actual self-efficacy: The impact on alcohol-related negative consequences.

- Rychtarik, R. G., McGillicuddy, N. B., & Barrick, C.
Assessing interest in online help among women with alcoholic partners.

- Stasiewicz, P. R.
Emotional processing as a change mechanism in alcoholism treatment.

- Vincent, P. C., Collins, R. L., Smith, J. M., & Wilson, S. D.
Social networks and substance use among regular malt liquor and marijuana users.

World Association for Infant Mental Health Congress, Leipzig, Germany

- Eiden, R. D., & Schuetz, P.
Prenatal cocaine exposure and mother-child aggression: A meditational model.

July

University of Ottawa Medical School, Ottawa, Canada

- Haj-Dahmane, S.
Endocannabinoids and the modulation of synaptic transmission and plasticity at glutamate synapses of monoaminergic neurons.

2010 Serotonin Club Meeting, Montreal, Canada

- Haj-Dahmane, S.
Stress and the modulation of endocannabinoid signaling in dorsal raphe serotonin neurons.

August

International LGBT Psychology Summer Institute, Ann Arbor, MI

- Hequembourg, A.
Sexual minority experiences of sexual aggression: Severity and characteristics.



Name:

Rebecca J. Houston, PhD

Education: PhD, Applied Biopsychology, University of New Orleans, LA

Professional Experience and Appointments:

Research Scientist, RIA, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Clinical Program, Department of Psychology, University at Buffalo

NIAAA Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Alcohol Research Center, Department of Psychiatry, University of Connecticut Medical School

Research Interests:

Psychophysiological substrates of impulse control and aggression and their role in the development and treatment of substance use disorders; assessment and treatment of aggressive behavior; implicit bias toward alcohol/drug cues in treatment; aggressive driving behavior and chronic alcohol use; neuropsychological assessment.

Research Projects:

Principal Investigator, *Impulse Control as a Mechanism of Change in the Treatment of Alcohol Dependence*, funded by NIAAA

Co-Investigator, *Attempted Suicide and Alcohol Dependence*, funded by NIAAA

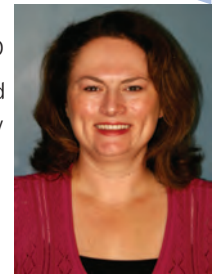
Co-Investigator, *Binge Drinking in Couples and Interpersonal Violence*, funded by NIAAA

Co-Investigator, *Etiology of Suicidal Behavior in Adolescence and Young Adulthood*, funded by CDC

Publications: Dr. Houston has published in *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Addictive Behaviors*, *Clinical Neurophysiology*, and *Aggressive Behavior* to name a few.

Memberships:

Society for Psychophysiological Research, Research Society on Alcoholism, Association for Psychological Science, International Society for Research on Aggression



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Research In Review

Parent Alcohol Problems, Peer Bullying & Victimization

“It is well known that children of parents with alcohol problems are at increased risk for interpersonal and behavioral problems, among other issues,” according to **Dr. Rina Das Eiden**. “This study was unique in that it examined peer bullying in children of parents who abuse alcohol, or those children who are already known to be at risk for maladaptive behaviors.”

According to attachment theory, parents who are warm, responsive and supportive during parent-child interactions are more likely to have securely attached children. Insecurely attached children may engage in greater bullying as a result of internal feelings of anger or mistrust, fear or poor communication skills which result from parental alcohol problems in the home as early as the toddler years.

In this study, middle school children (80 girls and 82 boys) in families with and without alcohol problems were recruited. Toddler-mother attachment was assessed when the child was 18 months of age and child reports of peer bullying and victimization were obtained in fourth grade. In order to be eligible for the study, both biological parents had to be living in the same household with the child from the time of the child’s birth until the first assessment when the child was one year old.

Results showed:

- Boys having both moms and dads with alcohol problems displayed higher rates of bullying toward their peers; girls did not.
- Secure attachment with the mother helped to moderate the risk for peer bullying among boys.
- For those boys who had an insecure attachment with their mothers, dad’s alcohol problem was associated with more peer bullying.
- For boys with secure attachment with their mothers, mom’s alcohol problem was associated with more peer bullying.
- No associations – either direct or indirect – were found between having a parent with alcohol problems and being victimized by peers in 4th grade.

These findings are important because they suggest interventions targeted at the quality of the relationship with the mom may have significant implications for peer relationships in middle

childhood, particularly for boys of parents with alcohol problems.

Furthermore, these findings suggest there are early effects and costs for children exposed to parental alcoholism.

“Although the findings from our study fill an important gap in the scientific literature,” Dr. Eiden explained, “there are several significant limitations as well.”

- The measures of bullying and victimization were based on child self-report alone and results may vary by reporter. The bullying and victimization measure did not explicitly measure relational forms of bullying, known to be a primary form of aggression with girls.
- The sample was restricted with regard to maternal alcohol problems because one exclusion criteria was maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy, but it was also limited because of the number of mothers with postnatal alcohol problems was relatively small. However, it is important to note that women with alcohol problems are more likely to have partners with alcohol problems than vice versa.
- These results may not be generalizable to families of single mothers who separated from or never lived with a partner who had alcohol problems.

For more, see: **Eiden, R. D., Ostrov, J. M., Colder, C. R., Leonard, K. E., Edwards, E. P., & Orrange-Torchia, T.** (2010). Parent alcohol problems and peer bullying and victimization: Child gender and toddler attachment security as moderators. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 39, 341-350. 🌀

Spotlight (cont’d from p. 4)

Awards and Honors:

2000 Andrew S. Wensel Distinguished Graduate Student Award, University of New Orleans

1997-2001 Louisiana Board of Regents Fellowship

Dr. Houston lives in Grand Island, NY and enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, playing softball (Go RIA Renegades!), and following St. Louis Cardinal baseball.

She may be reached at rhouston@ria.buffalo.edu. 🌀

Wellness at RIA

RIA staff have been involved in wellness activities on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus since 2004, participating in the Healthy Worksite Initiative, the Healthy Heart Program, America on the Move, Walking on Wednesdays and the Annual Health Fair/Block Party every August.

Individual efforts this year include **Danielle LeGare’s** springtime development and promotion of a Pilates class at lunchtime. A number of staff members come together to practice Pilates exercises led with a DVD program.

In June, a committed group of volunteers formed a Wellness Committee at RIA to foster staff interest in health-related activities. The group met for the first time on June 22 and included 17 staff members drawn from research projects, the postdoctoral program, principal investigators and other areas at the Institute. **Amy Myszka**, of UB’s Human Resources, Wellness and Work/Life Balance unit, attended by invitation to describe wellness-related programs provided by the University and to lend her support.

Two sub-committees were formed to survey RIA employees about their wellness needs and to investigate the feasibility of a weight management program in-house. Already the Wellness Committee has upgraded the webpage to include a meditation class, the UB Eat Well/Live Well program, the pilates class, connections to healthy lunch sites near RIA and healthy recipes to share. The Wellness Committee is chaired by **Dr. Kathleen Shyhalia**.

Meanwhile, RIA’s “Renegades” softball team enjoyed its 23rd year of play. The 15 person team, which included 13 men and women currently working at RIA, had one of its stronger seasons in 2010. In addition to the benefits of running around the bases and breathing in fresh air, playing softball together gives team members the opportunity to build and strengthen relationships. 🌀



L-R: Shannon Scott, Laurie Wikander and Aileen Tuohy take a moment to smile for the photographer at the September 16 “Taste of RIA” coordinated by RIA’s Wellness Committee.

Presentations *(cont'd from p. 4)*

International Society for Research on Aggression World Meeting, Storrs, CT

Leonard, K. E., Quigley, B. M., Testa, M., & Houston, R. J.

Alcohol use and aggressive behavior among adult men and women.

September

Society for Psychophysiological Research Meeting, Portland, OR

Panczakiewicz, A. L., Houston, R. J., & Wu, C.

Aggressive driving behavior: The P300 in response to aggressive and normal road events.

October

New York State Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers (ASAP) Conference, Saratoga Springs, NY

Barrick, C.

An overview of Behavioral Couples Therapy in substance abuse treatment settings.

Center for Developmental Science Seminar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Eiden, R. D.

Regulatory behaviors among children of substance using parents.

Council on Social Work Education Conference, Portland, OR

Mendoza, N. S., Resko, S. M., & Mendenhall, A.

Social workers and the postdoctoral experience: Building foundations for an interdisciplinary career.

Joint NIAAA/INSERM (Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale) Meeting, Paris, France

Leonard, K. E.

Research on alcohol and violent behavior: Where we've been, where we are, and where we might go. ☁

Corporate Challenge Fun

UB had one of the largest teams on June 10, with 178 staff and faculty members at the 2010 JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge, and RIA had one of the University's top finishers. **Amy Panczakiewicz** came in third place for the UB women with a finish time of 29 minutes, 17 seconds in the 3.5 mile race/walk. This year's Challenge benefited the Police Athletic League of Buffalo.

Kelly O'Hern once again organized the RIA contingent which included **Gerard Connors**, **Deanna Hamilton**, **Amy Hequembourg**, **Florence Leong**, **Christine Kemp**, **Linda King**, **Amy Panczakiewicz**, **Pam Novello Smith**, **Karen Stewart**, **Maria Testa**, **Brian Quigley** and **Jonathan Trinidad**.

Colleagues ended the evening in the UB tent, trading war stories, enjoying the barbecue picnic buffet, receiving their canvas tote and UB goodies like a squeeze ball, window sticker and T-shirt. Who's already training for next year? ☁

New Grants *(cont'd from p. 1)*

foundation for a larger research effort evaluating this promising new treatment delivery model.

This team includes **Drs. Neil B. McGillicuddy** and **Christopher Barrick**, of RIA.

September also included **Dr. Paul R. Stasiewicz's** receipt of \$757,030 from NIAAA -- including support through funds provided by ARRA -- to investigate Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), an empirically-supported treatment for alcohol dependence, and its effects on coping skills.

The project will involve 72 alcohol-dependent men and women participating in a 12-week trial of CBT and alcohol dependence. "The goal of this study is to map the process of change within successful CBT use in alcoholism treatment," Dr. Stasiewicz explained. "Ultimately, we expect to contribute to a refinement of existing treatment procedures and provide a clearer picture of the processes of recovery and relapse, with an eye toward reducing or eliminating problem areas."

Stasiewicz's co-investigator is **Dr. Clara M. Bradizza**, of RIA.

In May, 2010, RIA received a competing renewal award of \$1.7 million from NIAAA to continue RIA's Research Training on Alcohol Etiology and Treatment Program. The Co-Training Directors are RIA Director **Dr. Gerard J. Connors** and **Dr. R. Lorraine Collins**, of UB's School of Public Health and Health Professions.

The Postdoctoral Program currently has six scientists with varied academic backgrounds participating in quality research training on alcohol use and misuse and treatment for alcohol use disorders. This is the third, five-year award of support for the program by NIAAA.

In September, 2010, **Dr. Maria Testa** received a \$2 million award from NIAAA to examine the alcohol consumption and heavy drinking patterns present in a large proportion of incidents of sexual victimization and aggression among young college students. "Rates of sexual victimization and perpetration among college students are disturbingly high and most of what we know about alcohol and sexual aggression is based on information obtained from female victims," according to Dr. Testa. "In this study, we will investigate young college men's alcohol use and the part it plays in the perpetration of sexual aggression.

Dr. Testa's co-investigators on the study are **Dr. Kenneth E. Leonard** and **Dr. Kathleen A. Parks**. ☁

Postdoc Program Updates

The Research Training on Alcohol Etiology and Treatment Program was renewed for the third time this year. (See New Awards column on page one.) A total of 19 individuals have participated in the program while launching their addictions research careers since the program's inception in 2000.

Current participants include **Drs. Jaye Derrick**, **Brent Finger**, **Ashley Levitt**, **Natasha Mendoza**, **Robert Schlauch** and **Jonathan Trinidad**.



The newest program members are **Drs. Robert Schlauch** and **Ash Levitt**. **Dr. Schlauch** (left) is a clinical psychologist who received his doctorate from Florida State University and arrived at RIA in mid-July.

His research interests are treatment-seeking substance abusers and cue reactivity methodology.



Dr. Ash Levitt (left) is a social psychologist from the University of Missouri-Columbia who joined the program in September, 2010. His research interests are adult attachment dynamics, daily alcohol use and romantic relationship functioning.

Dr. Brent Finger, who joined RIA in 2008, is getting ready to graduate and is continuing his focus on the development of borderline and anti-social personality features in middle childhood.

Dr. Eric M. Truxell, who joined RIA in 2007, accepted a research associate position at SUNY Binghamton in July, where he plans to expand the breadth of his research to include the exploration of opiate involvement in ethanol reinforcement, following developmental exposure.

The Co-Training Directors of the program are **Dr. Gerard J. Connors** of RIA and **Dr. R. Lorraine Collins** of UB's School of Public Health and Health Professions. ☁

Spring 2010 Seminar Series In Review

Paul R. Stasiewicz, PhD opened RIA's Spring Seminar Series on March 26, 2010 with the presentation "Buddha and the Behavior Therapist: Learning to Ride the Wave." A senior research scientist at RIA and director of



the Clinical Research Center, Dr. Stasiewicz's presentation focused on how to help people who drink in response to negative emotional states. He outlined several similarities between Buddhism's practice of mindfulness and behavior therapy's practice of prolonged exposure. Notably, through direct and sustained experiencing of unpleasant thoughts and emotions, one is offered a way out of suffering. Like ocean waves, cravings and negative emotions increase, crest and then diminish. He discussed the application of both mindfulness and prolonged exposure to the treatment of individuals with substance use disorders. Dr. Stasiewicz presented the process of his current research studies and work with clients. Results of this research are expected to be published next year.

Carol Prescott, PhD continued on May 14 with the presentation "Beyond Heritability: Using Genetically Informative Samples to Study Etiology and Heterogeneity of Substance Use Disorders." A professor of Psychology at the



University of Southern California, Dr. Prescott presented an overview of her work on twin samples, principally from the Virginia Twin Registry. The broad goal of her research is to understand the genetic and environmental sources of individual differences in risk for alcohol dependence and other substance use disorders as well as the mechanisms by which this variation is translated into clinical syndromes. Specifically, Dr. Prescott discussed how heritability in the twin study samples can inform our understanding of substance use and other psychiatric disorders. She described the basic approach to understanding heritability estimates and discussed different applications of how these estimates can advance clinical research.

Thomas H. Brandon, PhD closed the series on May 21 with the presentation "Preventing Smoking Relapse: Dual Research Paradigms." A professor of Psychology and Oncology Sciences at the University of South Florida and director of the Tobacco Research



and Intervention Program at H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute in Tampa, Dr. Brandon provided a brief description of his various smoking intervention studies. They included Forever Free, a relapse prevention program using a hotline and a direct mail effort; Forever Quit, an intervention that built on the previous study and improved on its written communication materials; and Smoking and Pregnancy which highlighted partner support for quitting smoking. Dr. Brandon has multiple Buffalo connections in his work, having collaborated with Dr. Michael Cummings of Roswell Park Cancer Institute on the NYS Quitline Plus Study, and with RIA's own Drs. Clara Bradizza and Paul Stasiewicz on context and cue exposure therapy for smokers in a smoking cessation intervention. ☁

Fall 2010 Seminar Series In Review

Paul Vezina, PhD opened the Fall Seminar Series on September 24 with the presentation "Long-lasting Effects of Amphetamine on Brain and Behavior." Dr. Vezina is one of the foremost experts on the role of sensitization in psychostimulant addiction. He has a background in human behavioral psychology as well as neuropharmacology in animal models. His RIA presentation encompassed the effect of amphetamine use on midbrain dopamine neuron reactivity as responsible for subsequent self-administration of the drug. He explained his interest as why some individuals use more and more drugs, not why individuals use drugs at all. He discussed the impact of amphetamine intake on glutamate AMPA- receptor regulation and the dopamine-dependent and non-dependent



reinstatement of drug use. Dr. Vezina likened drug taking to over-eating and other behavioral pathologies associated with excessive consumption, stressing the importance of understanding these exaggerated behaviors in humans. Dr. Vezina is the research section chief and mission director in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience at The University of Chicago; he is also the director of the University's National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Training Program.

Jennifer P. Read, PhD presented "Trauma and Post-traumatic Stress: Associations with Drinking and Other Substance Use in College" on October 15. Dr. Read's two lines of research include the etiological factors in college



substance use and overlap between Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Substance Use Disorder (PTSD-SUD). She then provided details of her five current research studies: 1) trauma and PTSD at matriculation to college; 2) the longitudinal course of substance use during the first year of college; 3) smoking trajectories in the first year of college; 4) drinking patterns as a function of specific types of trauma (e.g., sexual assault involving alcohol and incapacitation; and 5) alcohol cognitions as a function of trauma cues and PTSD status. Her findings demonstrate that college students do present with trauma and PTSD. Secondly, both trauma and PTSD are identifiable as students enter college and argue for interventions targeted to these concerns. The risk conferred by trauma and PTSD persists beyond the first year of school. Lastly, initial findings provide some evidence for differences in cognitive processing of alcohol information in response to trauma cues; although not necessarily to PTSD. Dr. Read is associate professor in UB's Department of Psychology. ☁

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