



## From the Editor's Desk

The month of December has arrived and as we prepare to spend time with friends and family during the holidays, we bring to you the last issue of 2010. In this issue, find out more information about the upcoming FYI Colloquium that will be held in Williamsburg, VA. Plan to attend the outstanding scientific presentations from extramural scientists and fellow peers, as well as to participate in the various workshops that have been developed. Also included in this issue, review articles about the latest National Postdoc Appreciation Week, the announcement of FARE award recipients, and pictorial highlights from the recently held Science and Engineering Festival on the National Mall. Also, examine some key tips for maximizing your training experience in order to be successful. Finally, read the informational interview conducted with Dr. Monica Kerr, the Director of Science Alliance of the New York Academy of Sciences.

From all of us, wishing you all the best in 2011!

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IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE NEWSLETTERS PLEASE EMAIL US AT [ncicrfyi@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ncicrfyi@mail.nih.gov), or [Miranda.hanson@nih.gov](mailto:Miranda.hanson@nih.gov)

## CCR-FYI News

### The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual CCR-FYI Colloquium: Mark your calendars and plan to attend!

Imagine a scientific meeting that is as warm and welcoming as it is intellectually engaging, where you can enjoy research presentations, career development and networking all in the same meeting. Imagine a meeting specifically designed for the needs of fellows, and you would be hard-pressed to find one better than the CCR Fellows and Young Investigators Colloquium.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual FYI Colloquium brought together more than 300 post-doctoral and post-baccalaureate fellows in Hershey, PA, for an exciting three-day conference that included research presentations, workshops and more. On February 23-25, 2011, the FYI Steering Committee intends to build on this success in historic Williamsburg, VA, offering attendees a variety of exciting activities. Keynote speakers from a broad range of disciplines will share their science, and trainees from post-docs to graduate students to post-bacs will have the opportunity to present in oral and poster sessions. An outstanding post-doc and post-bac/grad student will be recognized as well, chosen by a selection committee from the CCR-FYI Steering Committee.

The non-research activities offered at the Colloquium aim to help you in your professional development, as well as to help make connections between our research here at the CCR and the work being done by scientists and nonscientists alike in areas like advocacy, policy and communications. Workshops for academia and industry will offer insight into research-focused careers, while workshops on policy and tech transfer will address careers away from the bench. The “What’s Happening Now”, “Building Skills to Get the Job You Want” and “Science Communication” workshops will give an overview of the resources available to you as a fellow that will help you hone your skills for the future, and the Office of Intramural Training and Education will be on hand for one-on-one CV/resume critiques.

A career fair that includes employers from around the region will introduce you to a variety of organizations and inform you of what they are looking for in new hires. Additionally, Ms.

Joanna Rudnick will share her experiences as a cancer “previvor”. In Ms. Rudnick’s documentary “In the Family”, she takes the audience along on her poignant journey of testing positive for the BRCA-1 mutation, and connects with other carriers and cancer survivors as she weighs the difficult options associated with the test result.

The Colloquium is funded by the generous support of the Center for Cancer Research Office of the Director and the Office of Training and Education, and is open to all members of the CCR community, including fellows, PIs and graduate students. Fellows are encouraged to submit abstracts, and several will be selected for oral and poster presentations by a panel of fellows. Keep an eye on your email for forthcoming communications about the submission deadline. The Colloquium has been going strong for ten years, and the 2011 meeting looks to be the best yet. See you there!



*Submitted by:*  
*Allison Bierly, PhD*  
*Laboratory of Experimental Immunology*  
*Cancer and Inflammation Program*

## Articles

### National Postdoc Appreciation Week: Increasing awareness of Fellows and celebrating our contributions to science

In 2009, the National Postdoc Association (NPA) embarked on increasing the awareness and recognizing the continuous efforts made by postdoctoral fellows in their respective institutions by implementing a National Postdoc Appreciation Day. The NIH was one of 70 institutions in the US and Canada that took part in this event. In 2010, the NPA further strengthened the recognition of the efforts of postdocs by extending the appreciation day to the National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW), spanning September 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the US House of Representatives passed H.R. 1545, a bill officially recognizing the NPAW and recognizing the significant contributions of fellows to scientific discovery in the US. The NIH/NCI was one of 87 institutions from around the US and Canada that participated in the events this year.

To celebrate NPAW, events were held in both the Bethesda and Frederick campuses. In Bethesda, the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) and Felcom joined forces to kick off the week's events by distributing cupcakes and taking a group photo with Dr. Francis Collins, the NIH Director. The Fellows and Young Investigators (FYI) Steering Committee also had an information booth at the event to promote the programs we currently offer to trainees. Numerous other social activities were held throughout the week such as a guided tour of the US

Capitol Building, a Fellows Nite at the Washington Nationals baseball game (against the Houston Astros) and a social gathering event.

In Frederick, the FYI Steering Committee, with assistance from Barbara Birnman and Julie Hartman (NCI-Frederick Office of Scientific Operations) organized a series of weeklong events. A panel discussion featuring Dr. Jonathan Wiest, the CCR Director in the Office of Training and Education, along with Drs. Jordan Irvin, PhD, Karen Wylie, PhD (both former NCI-Frederick fellows) and Ram Savan, PhD (current fellow). The interactive panel discussed issues ranging from career development, training, and mentoring to striving to maintain an achievable work-life balance. The FYI Steering Committee also set up a booth at the weekly NCI-Frederick Farmers Market to distribute information and program materials about the FYI,

Felcom and NPA, as well as providing popsicles to fellows. A group photo of fellows in attendance was taken and sent to Dr. Collins, as part of a montage of current NIH fellows at different locations. The following day, another professional development seminar was held after the bi-weekly Fellows Seminar Series. The guest speaker was Mr. Richard Weibl, the Director of the Center for Careers in Science and Technology at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). His informative talk provided insights into navigating the steps

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Figure: Photographs of trainees attending National Postdoc Appreciation Week events held in Frederick (top) and in Bethesda (bottom).



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to enhance networking opportunities, job searches and interviewing techniques. One of many important points he made during his presentation was to become prepared as possible for the next step in your career, and that networking with other scientists is a critical tool that one needs to always be involved in. The last event was the documentary screening *Naturally Obsessed: The Making of a Scientist*. This film documented the journey of three graduate students showing the trials and tribulations ranging from heartbreaking failures to

successful research experiments.

The events held throughout the week were well attended and the next NPAW is scheduled for September 19-23, 2011. Stay tuned for further announcements of planned events.

*Submitted by:  
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## NCI Fellows assist at the USA Science and Engineering Festival

The inaugural USA Science and Engineering Festival (<http://www.usasciencefestival.org/>) was held on the National Mall from October 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. The NIH was one of over 400 exhibitors that took part in this interactive 2-day festival, which was free to the general public. The goal of the festival was to stimulate and encourage the next generation to pursue interests in science, technology, engineering and math. The NCI was one of many NIH Institutes with “hands-on” experiments ranging from a laparoscopic surgery simulation to doing a chromatography experiment. Providing assistance in the NCI booths were fellows- Julie Belanger, PhD,

Rachel de Kluver, PhD, Jim Gould, PhD, and Karobi Moitra, PhD, who volunteered their time and were rewarded with the smiles from the kids and parents learning about science. Below are a few pictures that highlight the event. To read more about the NCI booth at this event, check out a featured article in the NCI-Frederick *The Poster* newsletter.

*Submitted by:  
Tim Chan, PhD*

*Laboratory of Experimental Immunology  
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Figure: The NCI Booth at the recent USA Science and Engineering Festival. “Make a Difference in the World-Learn about Cancer” was displayed (top left) and staffed by a group of happy volunteers (lower left). Children got “hands on” experience doing some simple chromatography experiments (middle and right), as volunteers assisted and parents looked on.

## Keys to a Successful Postdoc

At some point in every postdoc's training, questions like, "How long should I be a postdoc?", "How many publications is 'enough'?", "What will make me stand out from other postdocs?", and "Am I learning all of the necessary skills to succeed at the next level?" will arise. All of these questions stem from the paramount concern of how to make one's postdoc experience a successful one. In this article, I have collated the most fundamental elements of achieving this success based upon suggestions from principle investigators from both academia and industry. There is also a list of several websites and books that provide additional recommendations on this subject.



Figure: Some helpful keys to a successful postdoc

**Key #1:** Complete at least one major project and publish it.

**Key #2:** Manage time well by not being too distracted by unimportant things such as constantly answering emails. Focus on important, but not necessarily urgent things, such as attending seminars (asking questions is a plus), or presenting your research at a conference. You should make a name for yourself in the scientific research community; therefore, discussing your research to other investigators is critical.

**Key #3:** Be an expert in your field. Make contributions such as developing new techniques/approaches. You should know your research better than anyone else, and you should also know "a little about a lot" in your particular area of science. This knowledge is achieved by staying current with publications in your field, attending journal clubs, seminars, etc. In order to answer questions about the un-

known you must have a firm grasp on what is already known.

**Key #4:** Be able to communicate effectively - writing and speaking. Learn how to write grants, review journal articles, and volunteer to present at seminars. There are many workshops offered by NCI to improve your writing and speaking skills - take advantage of them! A postdoc needs superb writing and speaking skills to become a successful, well-funded PI.

**Key #5:** Review progress/Discuss career development with your advisor/PI. A great tool to facilitate this discussion is the Training Plan which is to be submitted with your renewal package and reviewed by the CCR Office of Training and Education (OTE).

**Key #6:** Devote some time to administrative work. As a PI, you will spend a majority of your day doing administrative work rather than spending time in the lab. Experience in writing IRBs, biosafety/animal protocols, reviewing grants, etc. is necessary for success at the next career level.

**Key #7:** Work hard! Working hard and working long is not always the same thing. Be efficient and focused while at work, but also learn how to balance work and home.

### Recommended websites:

- <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/careers/career-planning-resources>
- [http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/tools\\_tips/outreach/events/2010\\_04\\_07](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/tools_tips/outreach/events/2010_04_07)
- [http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\\_magazine/previous\\_issues/articles/2008\\_08\\_29/science.opms.r0800058](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2008_08_29/science.opms.r0800058)
- <https://www.training.nih.gov/home>
- <http://ccr.nci.nih.gov/careers/OfficeEducation.aspx>
- <http://chronicle.com/article/Making-the-Most-of-Your/66265/>

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- [http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=9831&page=1](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=9831&page=1)
- <http://www.phds.org/postdoc/improving-the-postdoctoral-experience/>

#### Recommended books:

- *Building a Successful Career in Scientific Research: A Guide for PhD Students and Postdocs*, by Phil Dee
- *A PhD Is Not Enough: A Guide To Survival In Science* by Peter J. Feibelman

- *The Chicago Guide to Your Career in Science: A Toolkit for Students and Postdocs* (Chicago Guides to Academic Life) by Victor A Bloomfield and Esam E.El-Fakahany



Submitted by:  
Miranda Hanson, PhD  
Laboratory of Molecular Immunoregulation  
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## An Interview with Dr. Monica Kerr- Director of Science Alliance, New York Academy of Sciences

I have always been motivated by people in science who are not only scientifically outstanding, but also extremely innovative; who always like to think outside the box and challenge themselves with new ventures. In my quest to explore more about the backgrounds of these successful professionals and to learn about their current achievements, I stumbled upon the profile of Dr. Monica Kerr, Director of the Science Alliance program at the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS). Dr. Kerr is a highly motivated and extremely dynamic, enterprising young woman, who earned her Ph.D. in Cell and Developmental Biology from Harvard Medical School while working in the laboratory of NAS member Dr. Lewis Cantley.

In addition to her passion for science, Dr. Kerr also harbors a desire to improve the education and training for the next generation of scientists. She strongly advocates ensuring that students with science backgrounds are made aware of the various avenues that are available to them and providing the necessary tools to help shape and enhance their careers. With this in mind, Dr. Kerr left the bench following graduation to focus on science education as an Instructor and Curriculum Fellow in the Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology Department at Harvard Medical School. She not only

educated students through classroom teaching, but was also involved in the development of science-based curricula for undergraduate, graduate, and medical school science courses. In addition, she was instrumental in launching new career advancement initiatives for science PhDs. During her tenure at Harvard, Dr. Kerr founded a new professional development series for life scientists, received two teaching awards, and was selected as a Harvard Macy Scholar for the prestigious Program for Educators in Health Professions.

Following her successful career at Harvard, Dr. Kerr joined the NYAS in February 2010 as the Director of Science Alliance. The Alliance program of the NYAS is devoted to advancing the scientific careers of students and post doctoral fellows in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The program offers career education, development and training programs for science PhDs through seminars, courses, webinars, and a dedicated website. <http://www.nyas.org/WhatWeDo/ScienceAlliance/Careers.aspx?tid=4ac9a42b-60f2-4391-87a0-f81535a6a41d>



Photograph of Dr. Monica Kerr, PhD, Director of Science Alliance, New York Academy of Sciences

As the Director of Science Alliance, Dr. Kerr oversees the organization and implementation of a broad range of career development activities for members of

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the Academy. She plans and executes anywhere between 12-15 Science Alliance events per year. She also conducts and edits career path video interviews, maintains a career blog, and presents career development seminars at institutions within the Science Alliance network. In order to extend the reach of her programming, Dr. Kerr has significantly increased the quantity of web-based resources available to graduate students and postdocs in the Alliance.

As if that is not an exhaustive job profile already, this work involves juggling numerous other day-to-day affairs like managing event logistics, designing marketing strategies, and reviewing budgets. Despite the fact that she dislikes some of the administrative aspects of her work, Dr. Kerr thoroughly enjoys the networking opportunities afforded in this position, allowing her to make fresh connections that transform into new workshops and career development offerings. She loves the fact that she still gets her share of extensive reading and research to keep abreast of the programs and policies at different institutions, in her efforts to bring them together, align their work, and provide the best programming possible.

Dr. Kerr has a lot of recommendations for young fellows with science backgrounds. Fellows interested in teaching should take advantage of various teaching opportunities for undergraduate and graduate-level courses. Fellows inclined towards pursuing scientific writing and editing as a career, should get involved with the editing and writing for the school newspaper, newsletter, etc.,

in addition to editing manuscripts for their lab and peers. Dr. Kerr suggests that fellows with interests in business/ business administration/ patent law should actively participate in events organized by student and postdoc associations and to demonstrate their management skills by working with these associations either as team members or project leaders. She further advises fellows to seek part-time coursework in new areas to not only determine if they want to pursue those fields more rigorously, but also to strengthen their background to enter into today's dynamic job market. She warns the aspiring students of the extremely competitive and challenging job market and advises them to remain resilient, yet flexible, and to constantly stay open to serendipity. She also firmly believes in the power of networking.

Dr. Kerr continues to be actively involved in professional networking in New York, in an effort to bridge the gap between different fields as well as to make students (young and old) aware about the various career opportunities. I would strongly encourage you to follow Dr. Kerr's career path and her latest achievements through her blog page [www.scienceallianceforum.org](http://www.scienceallianceforum.org). She sometimes misses being at the bench, but she remains extremely excited about what she is doing and thoroughly enjoys innovating and creating new programs to enhance the experiences of today's science PhDs.

*Submitted by:  
Chhavi Chauhan, PhD  
Mouse Cancer Genetics Program*

**Are you interested in getting the next issue of our newsletter?  
Want to stay up to date with trainee-related events within CCR?**

**Sign up for the CCR-POSTDOCs listserv**

**All you have to do is email [listserv@list.nih.gov](mailto:listserv@list.nih.gov) and type in "subscribe ccr-postdocs"  
in the body of the message**

## 2011 FARE Winners Announced

The winners of the annual FARE awards were announced in August and included more than sixty fellows from the NCI-CCR. An awards ceremony for the FARE awards was held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the NIH Research Festival. Initiated in 1995, the FARE, or Fellows Award for Research Excellence, awards are given in recognition of outstanding scientific research conducted by intramural post-doctoral fellows and graduate students. This award is sponsored by the NIH Fellows Committee (Felcom) with financial support from the Scientific Directors. Abstracts are invited across a broad range of disciplines with study sections in biochemistry, cell biology, chemistry, epidemiology, genetics, immunology, molecular biology, neuroscience, signal transduction, virology, and many more. The top 25% of abstracts from each study section are chosen for this award. Winners of a FARE award each receive a \$1000 stipend to attend a scientific meeting at which they present

their abstract, either as a poster or a seminar. Winners are asked to present their research at the NIH Research Festival and also to act as a judge for the 2012 FARE award. Keep an eye out for the call for 2012 FARE submissions in Feb/March 2011. The full list of winners, sorted by IC or study section is available on the Felcom website <http://felcom.od.nih.gov/subCommittee/fare.aspx>.

Congratulations to all 2011 FARE award winners! In addition, FARE winners should also contact Jonathan Wiest ([wiestj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:wiestj@mail.nih.gov)) with a short justification for attending the meeting of their choice with a link to the meeting for approval to use the funds.

*Submitted by:  
Geraldine O'Connor, PhD  
Laboratory of Experimental Immunology  
Cancer and Inflammation Program*

## Have you updated your annual Training Plan lately?

### Opportunities to Practice Talks for Conferences, Seminars & Job Interviews

The **PASS (Presentation and Seminar Skills)** series has teamed up with Scott Morgan to provide CCR scientists with an hour-long session of one-on-one tutoring. During this session, you will go through your presentation with Scott, where he will provide feedback on style, content, delivery of message, etc. A week or two later, you will then have the opportunity to present your talk in front of your colleagues and to receive constructive feedback. Scott will also attend and provide additional feedback following the presentation. Scott has over 15 years of valuable experience in science communication and has recently co-authored a book, 'Speaking about Science'.

We will work with you and Scott to arrange a suitable time and schedule. This is a wonderful opportunity for anyone who wishes to improve his/her presentation skills either for a meeting presentation or job talk.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity or have additional questions, please contact either **Brid Ryan** ([ryanb@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ryanb@mail.nih.gov)) or **Christy Tomlinson** ([tomlinsoncc@mail.nih.gov](mailto:tomlinsoncc@mail.nih.gov)). Available slots will be filled on a first come – first served basis.



## Upcoming Events

- **Frederick Postdoc Seminar Series**
  - Wednesdays starting at 1:15 PM in Bldg 549 Auditorium
  - Everyone is welcome to attend
  - Winter Dates : **January 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, February 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, March 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>**
  - If you are interested in participating as a speaker, please contact Linda Brubaker ([brubakerld@mail.nih.gov](mailto:brubakerld@mail.nih.gov))
- **2011 NIH Spring Research Festival** (Bethesda Campus, May 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>)
- **2011 NCI-Frederick and Ft. Detrick Spring Research Festival** (April 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>)
  - The Spring Research Festival Post Doc Symposium titled “Cell Signaling in Cancer, Auto-immunity and Infectious Diseases” will be held Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

### Interested in joining the FYI Steering Committee?

Check it out by attending one of our monthly video-conference meetings on the last Thursday of each month

**Where:**            **Bethesda: Bldg 40, Rm 1201/1203**  
                          **Frederick: Bldg 549, Conference Room A**

**Time:**            **11:00 AM– 12PM**

### Are you **LinkedIn** with the CCR FYI?

Check it out at <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?qid=2495548>

If you are not on LinkedIn, you will have to create an account, which takes no more than five minutes

The Fellows and Young Investigators (FYI) Association was organized by non-tenured and non-tenure-track MDs, PhDs, or the equivalent, and pre-doctoral intramural scientists. It enhances the intramural training program, fosters communication among fellows and the CCR community, and serves as a liaison to administration programs that affect the training experience by:

- Organizing and promoting educational activities such as training courses and seminars
- Identifying potential employment opportunities in traditional and nontraditional career paths
- Helping orient new trainees
- Facilitating communication among members

**The purpose of this group is to professionally link current and previous NCI fellows.**