





The University of Sydney  
Australia

# NEWS

## Nepean Clinical School

### ***New Clinical Titles:***

Dr. Bamini Gopinath – Research Fellow

### ***New Faces:***

Li Zhang (Lee) – Visiting scholar from China

Pauline Fenech – Research Assistant in Psychology

William Dey – Honours student in Paediatrics

Randall Kelly – Honours student in Medicine

Marie Costandi – Honours student in Medicine

Ryan Costandi – Honours (BAnVetSioSc) student in Haematology

### ***Farewells :***

Ms. Sandy Huskic – Research Assistant

### ***Deaths :***

Prof. Chris Martin : Head of Surgery – (see obituary inside)

Lyn Denman : One of our “Patient Partners” who suffered from Rheumatoid Arthritis for 74 years and was a wonderful person.

### ***Contact for the Clinical school Newsletter :***

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The University of Sydney

Faculty of Medicine  
1856-2006  
Ambition  
Inspired by  
Achievement



150



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# NEWSLETTER

December 2006



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## Nepean Clinical School



*Professor Michael Peck*

As 2006 comes to end it is the beginning of a bigger and brighter future for the Nepean Clinical School.

• At the recent 150th/50th/15th Anniversary Ball run by the Nepean Medical Research Foundation over \$1,000,000 was raised for research at our Clinical School

- Offers have been made to 6 new senior academics in Geriatrics, Neurology, Critical Care, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Paediatrics and Gynaecology.
- A new education area is being developed

All of this is great news and will help us improve the student experience at Nepean and promote research.

I would like to thank all the doctors, nurses and allied health staff who have helped teach our students in 2006. Without you we would not be able to bring medical students to Nepean. Having a successful Clinical School at Nepean will help attract staff and provide our area with first class medical care.

From all the staff at Nepean Clinical School,

Merry Christmas and happy New Year

**Professor Michael John Peck**

*Associate Dean*

Nepean Clinical School



*Merry Christmas from the staff at Nepean Clinical School*

# Nepean Annual Scientific Day

The Nepean Annual Scientific Day held on Friday 29th September 2006 was a great success with excellent presentations, both oral and poster. This year was organised by the Department of Women and Children's Health and included talks and posters from many disciplines.

Guest Speakers were:

*Dr. Andrew Kemp* - from The Children's Hospital Westmead, who spoke on "Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis in Childhood"

*Professor Jonathan Morris* - from The Royal North Shore Hospital, who spoke on "Paradoxes of Pregnancy"

*A/Professor Sally Tracy* - from the National Statistics Unit UNSW

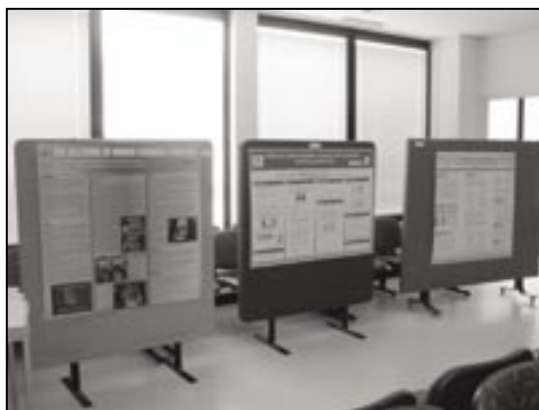
Recipients of prizes were:

## Nepean Medal for Best Oral Presentation

*A/Professor Hans Peter Dietz* presented by Dr Nghi Phung from the Medical Staff Council

## Bateman Battersby prize for Best Emerging Researcher

*David Fauchon* presented by John Bateman



Posters from the Nepean Annual Scientific Day

## Nepean Medical Research Foundation prize for Best Poster

*Bau L Nguyen* presented by Gwen McMaster-Fay

Congratulations to the winners.

The day showcased the research taking place at Nepean and the commitment Nepean has to continuing and growing research into the future.

Many thanks to the Medical Staff Council, the Nepean Medical Research Foundation and Bateman Battersby for sponsoring the awards.



Bau L Nguyen

# New Students

## Ryan Stevenson

I am currently completing a bachelor's degree in Animal and Veterinary Bioscience at the University of Sydney entering my final year of the degree in 2007. My honours project in haematology under Prof. Jim Wiley will investigate the function of the P2X7 receptor on canine and human red and white blood cells, which is important in infectious and autoimmune diseases.

## William Dey

I'm currently a second year medical student doing a project in A/P Ralph Nanan's paediatrics lab which is looking into the role of T Regulatory Cell in thyroid autoimmune diseases, in conjunction with Jack Wall's group (medicine). Before medicine I completed a general degree in science and at the end foccled on physiology, neuroscience, pathology and anatomy.



Ryan Stevenson



William Dey

# Gastroenterology

## *Prof. Nick Talley*

The Gastroenterology Research Unit at Nepean Hospital is working on a range of studies focusing on stomach and bowel disorders. These involve epidemiological and clinical research in diabetes mellitus, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, gastroparesis, and non-cardiac chest pain. Recently, the Unit completed a large-scale community survey that is aimed at finding an association between gastrointestinal symptoms and obesity. An upcoming study, in collaboration with the University of Western Sydney, will investigate parental attachment style and psychobiological functioning in individuals with irritable bowel syndrome.

## *Sandy Huskic*

Sandy Huskic has just left us to travel around Europe for 3 months. She has been working at Nepean Clinical School in Gastroenterology in the Department of Medicine since May 2000. Sandy was working with Prof. Nick Talley, Dr. Jim Kalantar and A/P. Martin Weltman on a variety of projects and clinical trials, involving Sydney University, SWAHS, and various hospitals. Sandy will be greatly missed and we wish her all the best in her future as she continues with her Clinical Research.



*Sandy Huskic*

## *Pauline Fenech*

I commenced my position as a Research Assistant for the Department of Psychological Medicine (headed by A/Prof Starcevic) on 31st July 2006, after graduating with a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) degree in April 2006. I completed my tertiary studies part-time, by distance education through the University of New England, whilst working full-time as a Bilingual Customer Service Officer for Centrelink. I am also provisionally registered as an Intern Psychologist with the NSW Psychologists Registration Board. I am completing my 2yr Psychology Internship (to gain full registration as a Psychologist in NSW) through the Transcultural Mental Health Centre, located within the grounds of Cumberland Hospital. My current role involves assisting with research projects in collaboration with the Nepean Anxiety Disorders Clinic.



*Pauline Fenech*

## *Li Zhang*

My name is Li Zhang, but I call myself Lee. I was a Professor in the Division of Gastroenterology, in the Second Affiliated Hospital of Nanhua University, Hengyang, HuNan Province, People Republic of China, and worked as a physician. I came here as a Visiting Scholar in the Division of Gastroenterology, Department of Medicine, Nepean Hospital to study and research for one year. I came here to learn your advanced science and technology. I will be studying together with Drs Kalantar and Eslick in the field of diseases relative to H. pylori or gastric-intestinal cancers, and get an experience in clinical medicine. I intend building a good relationship with the Department of Medicine at Nepean Hospital and the University of Sydney, to continue communication in the future. This is a great chance learn English well, so that I can communicate with people all over the world. I will be doing experiments in first nine months of the year and take part in clinics in the last 3 months.



*Li Zhang*

# Nepean Medical Research Foundation Celebration Ball

Finally, the long awaited day arrived, after many hours of preparation and anxious planning, the Celebration Ball sponsored by the Nepean Medical Research Foundation to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of The University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine, 50th Anniversary of Nepean Hospital on its present site and the 15th Anniversary of the Nepean Clinical School (formerly known as the Western Clinical School).

The Celebration Ball was a great success and was attended by 300 guests. Mrs Gwen McMaster-Fay, President of the NMRF discussed the Foundation and its goals, Professor Richmond Jeremy spoke on behalf of the The University of Sydney 150th Anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Tony McLean, Head of Critical Care at Nepean Hospital talked about the 50th Anniversary of Nepean Hospital being on its present site and Associate Dean, Professor Michael Peek talked about the 15th Anniversary of the Nepean Clinical School.

Mr John Bateman of Bateman and Battersby Solicitors explained the vision of approaching 50 local businesses in the Penrith area and ask for a donation to the NMRF of \$2,500.00 per year for five years. He was able to see his dream realized and on Saturday evening he announced that he had signed up 40 companies to join the "Philanthropists". Professor Richmond Jeremy, from The University of Sydney then announced that the University would match dollar for dollar. There was also a pledge from The Honorable Jackie Kelly, Federal Member for Lindsay of \$50,000.00 from funds raised in the 2007 Pollie Pedal long-distance bike ride for charity in 2007 and State Member for Penrith, Karen Paluzzano has pledged \$2,500.00. Approximately \$8,000.00 was also raised from the silent auctions and raffles.

## Lynne Gallaty



*Prof. Peek cutting the anniversary cake with Gwen McMaster Faye, Prof. Richmond Jeremy and A/P Tony McLean*



*Prof. Richmond Jeremy and John Bateman shaking over the university matching dollar for dollar raised*



*Attending students with Prof. Peek, Sarah Morton and Marilyn Reed*



*Some of the Philanthropists*

# Nepean Clinical School Teaching and Research Retreat

## *Turner's Vineyard, Orange 18-19th August 2006*

On the 18th and 19th August, Nepean Clinical School (NCS), held their annual Teaching and Research Retreat at Turner's Vineyard in Orange, which was attended by teachers, research staff and students, from Nepean, Central, Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst Clinical Schools.

The conference was held to discuss and compare programs, problems, and achievements at the various sites, with discussion and feedback after each presentation. It covered increased student numbers, funding, research support, tutor availability, space and patients.

It began on the Friday with a welcome from Prof. Michael Peek (NCS) and A/P Joe Canalese (Rural Clinical School- RCS)

A/P Chris Roberts, Director & Associate Dean Education for Sydney University, discussed the progress on the new curriculum and what it means to the Nepean Clinical School.

Dr Bernard Champion (NCS) presented "project 50" for GMP3 trying to solve problems and suggest improvements.

Dr Bill Kefalas presented "Education in the Wider World" from the Ottawa Conference he attended in New York (see August

newsletter)

Prof. Michael Peek spoke about growth and infrastructure in the Nepean Clinical School.

Day 1 ended on a high note with a wine tasting and a lovely dinner at the Vineyard's Bar and Grill Restaurant.

Day 2 began after breakfast with Prof. Peek speaking about the current issues relating to research.

This was followed by A/P John Cartmill presenting Systemic Safety in Surgery, including the unconscious body language used between theatre staff during operations.

A/P Joe Canalese and Dr. Kumara Mendis followed with a discussion on research at the School of Rural Health.

The final talk was from A/P Vladan Starcevic from NCS on "the Relevance and Research in Anxiety Disorders."

The retreat ended successfully early on the Saturday afternoon with an invitation to tour the Orange Campus for interested parties.

**Susan Dowd**

## OZWAC

Recently Channel 7 television personality Tara Dennis visited Nepean Hospital as a supporter of OZWAC ( Australian Women and Children's Research Foundation) who raise vital funds for research. Tara visited the Neo Natal Intensive Care unit and spoke extensively with the medical team. Tara said that she was overwhelmed with the work being undertaken at the hospital and the facilities and equipment that OZWAC had helped to provide. Whilst at the hospital Tara also filmed segments to be used by OZWAC in their fund raising video.



*Tara Dennis visits the ICU*



*A/P Ralph Nanan, Lea Hicks, Tracie Frater, Melanie Kennedy, Prof Michael Peek, Tara Dennis, Mark Tracey, Bruce Williams, Diane Courtman and Ann Quinton*

# Obituary for Professor Christopher John Martin 1948-2006

Christopher John Martin, Foundation Professor of Surgery at Nepean Hospital, died last week from oligodendroglioma, seven months after the stroke that led to the diagnosis. He was 58, at the height of his power, and his department, colleagues and patients miss him.

Chris Martin earned his BSc (Hons) at the University of Sydney and his Master of Science at the Max Planck Institute in Germany before completing his MB BS (Hons) at Royal North Shore Hospital in 1974. Chris was made a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1981 and joined the academic staff of the University of Melbourne at St Vincent's Hospital in 1982 where he remained until his appointment to the University of Sydney.

In Melbourne, Chris developed a practice in upper gastrointestinal surgery while conducting a laboratory based research program into the mechanisms controlling transient lower oesophageal sphincter relaxation; the principle mechanism of oesophageal reflux. During an 8 year period Chris had 8 post graduate students working on this project with seven of the eight receiving higher degrees.

Chris had been raised in Sydney, in Homebush, and when the opportunity to develop the Clinical School at Nepean occurred he returned, bringing his family and research program with him.

When Chris arrived a little over 13 years ago, Nepean was a regional hospital, albeit an energetic and strategically situated one. With the help and co-operation of colleagues he oversaw Nepean's growth into a tertiary referral centre, independent clinical school and popular surgical training program. One of Chris' greatest legacies to the growing hospital was his skill as a recruiter. Two of his postgraduate students from Melbourne became surgical colleagues in the new department and other surgeons came from Australia and overseas to join him in the busy hospital in this rapidly growing part of Sydney.

As a Foundation Professor, appointed to a well established hospital, some "town-gown" friction may have been anticipated but Chris was able to bring out the best qualities of both in a way that was mutually beneficial and inspired the pride and commitment of all involved.

A small portrait of John Hunter, the reluctant surgeon, hung in Chris Martin's office. John Hunter practiced in the eighteenth century and could be considered the first scientist surgeon; conceiving solutions to the diseases of his day, proving the principle of a surgical approach through controlled experiment and then proceeding, with a knife, into new territory, boldly, but with some reluctance, only too aware of the potential for harm. Chris brought a similar experimental rigour to his surgery. The objective laboratory evaluation of his patient's physiology informed patient selection and it showed in his results.

Chris did not shy away from surgical challenges and when he had no alternative operated at the edge of what could be achieved. There was no shortage of these challenges as his reputation grew, particularly for complex, redo oesophageal surgery (hard enough the first time around). This is not always a comfortable place for a surgeon and sometimes, not often, his frustration showed, an indication of the extent to which he would go for his patients. In these circumstances



the other members of his team would stay with him knowing that the emotion was not directed at them.

Chris was good with a knife and embraced the essential paradox of surgery whereby one only helps people by injuring them first. However it was the search for alternatives, minimally invasive alternatives, that drove much of his later research.

Chris was involved in the development of transcystic stenting of the common bile duct at the time of laparoscopic cholecystectomy. This technique facilitates the post operative endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography needed to remove stones. The stent kits, now commercially available, are called "Nepean" kits. Chris invented a novel drug delivery system, instruments and new techniques. He was a pioneer in mucosal resection, and the management of dysplastic Barrett's oesophagus with photodynamic therapy. Nepean was the only center in Australia and one of only a handful in the world managing this pre-malignant condition with minimally invasive therapy.

Chris was active in the Surgical Research Society, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the National Health and Medical Research Council as well as many local and international specialty groups. He traveled widely and taught generously. His patients adored him. Aboriginal health was close to his heart. Chris was only too aware that there were dimensions of patient care outside his experience and a telling example of this was his establishment of "Whipple's Warriors," a self help / support group for patients and their families after a Whipple resection of the pancreas, usually for cancer. Chris insisted that the "Warriors" be completely independent of medical input and the group survives. It was poignant to see patients wearing "Whipple Warrior" T shirts at Professor Martin's funeral.

Chris balanced his clinical, research and teaching roles better than many surgeons. Time with Margie and their children Jonathon, James and Isabella (13 this year) at home or at Patonga where he had sailed and fished as a child...was carefully protected. Chris meticulously preserved time for his growing family, indeed he treated time with them as the most precious thing. How could he have known just how precious that time was.

**John Cartmill**  
**Michael Cox**

# Professor Jack Wall

Professor Jack Wall, the Professor of Medicine at Nepean Clinical School and his team of researchers have made significant progress in the field of thyroid associated ophthalmopathy or the 'poppy eye' syndrome in Graves' disease patients, over the past year. This has been demonstrated by their four publications in 2006:

1. Gopinath B, Musselman R, Tani J, Beard N, Adams CL, Wall JR. Antibodies targeting the calcium binding skeletal muscle protein calsequestrin are sensitive and specific markers of ocular myopathy in patients with Graves' disease. *Clinical and Experimental Immunology* 2006; 145:56-62.
2. Tani J, Wall JR. Autoimmunity against eye-muscle antigens may explain thyroid-associated ophthalmopathy. *CMAJ* 2006; 175:239-241.
3. Gopinath B, Musselman R, Adams CL, Tani J, Beard N, Wall JR. Study of serum antibodies against three eye muscle antigens and the connective tissue antigen collagen XIII in patients with Graves' disease with and without ophthalmopathy – correlation with clinical features. *Thyroid* 2006; 16:967-974.
4. Bednarczuk T, Gopinath B, Ploski R, Wall JR. Susceptibility genes in Graves' Ophthalmopathy – Searching for a needle in a haystack? *Clinical Endocrinology* In press.

In addition, Professor Wall's research team had a poster and oral presentation at the 77th American thyroid Association:

Oral: Gopinath B, Musselman R, Tani J, Beard N, Adams CL, Wall JR. Study of serum antibodies against three eye muscle antigens and the connective tissue antigen collagen XIII in patients with Graves' disease with and without ophthalmopathy – correlation with clinical features.

Poster: Gopinath B, Tani J, Beard N, Gan RM, Wall JR. Role of eye muscle antibody testing in the diagnosis of acute orbital myositis.

Finally and most recently, two press releases have outlined the groundbreaking research which has been carried out at Nepean Clinical School by Professor Wall and his group:

1. 'Professor sees way to a cure' - Penrith Press, 10/11/06
2. 'SWAHS Research Breakthrough for Eye Disease' – Sydney West Weekly, 20/10/06

