2012 was a year of turmoil and dissention. The volatile world economic situation, earthquakes, tidal waves, mud slides, hurricanes/typhoons (including “our” devastating Sandy), continuing civil wars and genocide, rancorous political campaigns – all of these diminished the quality of life we would all like to enjoy and to afford others. In many of our own lives there were losses: the sickness or death of a loved one, the loss of a job, damage to our homes and lifestyles from an accident or natural disaster, etc.

Fortunately, there were bright spots, and within the Ojima Group Family, happy tidings of engagements and weddings, new babies, promotions and new jobs, etc. Many of these have already been shared on the Ojima Group web site, and, if yours have not yet, I urge you to do so. With the redesigned site, it is easier than ever to share news and photos. In addition to clicking on the links below to catch up on others members’ news, you can send your own news, announcements, and photos directly to the webmasters for inclusion on the sites by using this email address: ojima.sbu@gmail.com

For those of you who have already discovered how simple it is, please continue to share your news with the rest of us.

http://www.chem.stonybrook.edu/faculty/ojima.shtml
http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/ojima_group/

2012 was a busy and eventful year for the Ojima Group in various ways. Typically, Professor Ojima travelled extensively, beginning with an unusual trip to Japan in January for a series of invited lectures, including one at RIKEN. Then it was back to Stony Brook and his regular teaching and other responsibilities until March and the ACS Meeting in San Diego, where an excellent reunion dinner was organized by Leila Abrous, and attended by “old timers” Scott Kuduk, Chung-Ying Tsai, Subrata Chakravarty, Pierre-Yves Bounaud and others. Professor Ojima had to leave ACS on the third day in order to attend a Cancer Research Meeting in Chicago, and then rush off to Bethesda, MD for an NCI Technical Evaluation Panel before being able to return home for the balance of the spring semester.

Immediately after the Hooding Ceremony, however, he was off again, this time to Spain to give an invited lecture at the “3rd International Symposium on Organofluorine Compounds in Biomedical, Materials and Agricultural Sciences”, Valencia, and several other venues. After barely a week at home, he was off again, this time for ten days in Fujian and Hainan, China. From the end of June until the ACS Meeting in August he caught up on lab matters. During this period we learned of his selection as the recipient of the 2013 American Chemical Society Award for Creative Work in Fluorine Chemistry, which will be officially awarded at the Spring 2013 ACS Meeting in New Orleans.

At the August ACS Meeting in Philadelphia, where most of his current lab members were presenting, there was another excellent reunion, this time organized by Stephan Brandstadter, and attended by Stephan’s wife, Stephanie Sen, and by Hojae Choi, Elke Schoffers, and Songnian Lin, as well as Dr. Honda and 11 current students and postdocs.
As usual, in October and November Professor Ojima made his annual lecture/consulting trip to Japan, but in 2012 it included “side trips” to South Korea (Seoul and Daejon) and China (Shanghai and Nanjing). He returned just in time for the annual Thanksgiving Eve Gala, which was, as usual, one of the highlights of the year! He and Yoko ended the year with their usual “working vacation” in Hawaii.

The other highlight of the year for me, personally, was the semi-surprise 15th year anniversary and 70th birthday party on September 1st. I cannot possibly express how deeply touched and thrilled I was at all the expressions of support, gratitude and love from so many of you, both those of you who attended and those who could not make it but contributed to the album and/or sent wonderful messages and thoughtful gifts. Although Professor Ojima had to let me know about it to make sure I would attend, and a few people had inadvertently referred to the event, it was a tremendous surprise to see so many of you there, especially those from as far away as San Francisco and Seattle. Joe Kaloko deserves a “Purple Heart” for suffering an auto accident while trying to come to the party! I am attaching a group photo of most of the attendees (some had to leave before it was taken), and those of you who would like to see more can click on this link:

https://picasaweb.google.com/iwaoojima/PatS15YearAnniversaryCelebrationLongfei?authkey=Gv1sRgCPGJsvOCs9NDt0AE#

We also had excellent news from our 2011 high school student researchers. Sarah Chapin was a Semi-finalist in both the Siemens and Intel competitions, and ISEF Finalist and was accepted to Harvard University. Rocco Morra and Garima Yadav were also Intel Semifinalists. Rocco was accepted at Dartmouth and Garima came here to Stony Brook (Yea!!)

Meanwhile, there were a number of other arrivals and departures during the year. In February we were happy to welcome Dr. Wei Li, who is working in Dr. Honda’s lab; and in April, Dr. Akira Saito, who was a visiting graduate student in fall 2010, returned to Stony Brook, also as a postdoc in the Honda lab. However, we had an unusually large number of graduating seniors in May, and had to say a bittersweet farewell to Alicia Chionchio, Dharam Gohil, Phillip Son, Adele Whaley, and Huimin Wu, who all did their Senior Thesis Research under Professor Ojima’s supervision. Edison Zuniga was awarded his Ph.D. at the same time, but fortunately, he was able to stay on in the lab until leaving for a position in the Seattle area in mid-July, shortly before Chih-Feng (Corey) Lin successfully defended his Ph.D.

Of course, Professor Ojima had four new graduate students entering the lab in late May: Krupa Haranahalli, Simon Tong, Changwei Wang, and Longfei Wei, and soon they were joined by undergraduates Evan Herlihy and Erich Horeth, recipient of the first “Chancellor’s Educational Pipeline Research Award Summer Program”, funded by a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and two excellent high school summer researchers, Rajkumar Pammal (brother to Shalini) and Raghav Tripathi, from Portland, Oregon. Another high school student, Allison Chowdhury, started her research under Dr. Honda’s supervision. All of the newcomers were suitably feted at the Annual Ojima Barbecue, photos of which you can view via the website. Of course, that meant that we would have to say farewell to all of them much too soon, but happily, we have been able to stay in touch with them, as they followed up on the progress of their projects and, in the case of the high school students, obtain the required forms and letters for all the science competitions. Also leaving the Group in August to return to Japan (via San Diego) was our visiting scholar Takahashi Motohiro.

With the fall came the arrival of three more undergraduates: Shabiri (Brinda) Dasgupta, Lian Liu, and Virghinya Ridwan. Edwin Lazo, an MS candidate also began his thesis research under Professor Ojima’s supervision while continuing to work at Brookhaven National Laboratory. The newcomers helped fill some of the empty spaces in the labs and offices. Unfortunately, fall also brought “Sandy” a
massive out-of-season hurricane that merged with another low pressure area from the Midwest to produce an unprecedented and incredibly devastating “superstorm”. Professor Ojima preserved his personal record of avoiding disasters by being away for the event, which left many lab members in the dark and without heat for days or weeks. Most of the lab members were fortunate compared to the many who lost everything, but Roxanne’s home suffered substantial damage. Eventually, though we were able to set aside our cares for a while and enjoy the Ojimas’ traditional lavish hospitality at the Thanksgiving Eve Gala.

Sadly, as the year drew to a close, we learned that we were losing two of our postdocs, Eduard Melief and Anushree Kamath, who were moving on to pursue new challenges, but we hope they will have fond memories of their time in the Ojima Lab, as we do of them, and wish them the best in all their endeavors.

Please allow me to extend my wishes for success and happiness to all of you, as well, and to express my profound hope that those people who choose to deny global warming and climate change will see the increase in violent and atypical weather patterns and natural disasters as the wake-up call it should be!

I pray that the world we leave to our children and grandchildren will afford them the same opportunities that we have had and not be robbed of all its beauty and diversity and vigor by the greed and selfishness that have become so apparent in the last decade.

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.”

- St. Augustine

Love and Peace,

Pat