GREETINGS OF THE SEASON!

December 2003

The past year has been a busy and eventful one for the Ojima Group. A number of Ojima Alumni became parents, many changed jobs, got married, purchased homes, etc. Besides staying in contact with them directly, the very best way to find out what your former classmates and co-workers are doing is to visit Professor Ojima’s web pages. We are making every effort to update them on regular basis, including adding new photos after each event and when they are sent to us. Please take the time to browse the website and don’t forget to keep in touch and send us your own news, photos, etc.

Shortly after the beginning of 2002 we welcomed our new French postdoc, Bibia Bennacer to Stony Brook. Although she had some problems initially because of new BCIS (formerly INS) procedures, she has become an integral part of the group. Bibia was followed by Ilaria Zanardi, in February and Greta Varchi, at the beginning of April. Ilaria is a visiting scholar on a fellowship from Indena, and Greta is a postdoc for the Italian National Research Council.

Also new to the Ojima Group this year were four very bright and enthusiastic young high school researchers, Sarah Fink, Lindsay Fourman, Erica Ravin, and Rohit Repala. Collectively they did some very impressive research over the summer and have already won honors in the national competitions and gained admission to some prestigious universities.

Sadly, there were also some departures. Warren Hans earned his BS in May, and left for a job in industry. Ed Wu was awarded his Ph.D., as was Grace Chuang, who completed her requirements in December but returned to Stony Brook to attend the hooding ceremony. Deric Geng also came back to receive the very prestigious President’s Award at that time. Victor Vassar left in September for a position at a “start up” company in San Diego, and Ed Wu and Ioana Ungureanu made their farewells at the traditional Thanksgiving Eve celebration at the Ojima home. Ed accepted a position in Boston, and Ioana is now in Cincinnati. (Refer to the Members’ List for company names.)

As those of you for whom we have a valid email address will already be aware, Yoko’s father, Mr. Seiju Ogino, passed away suddenly on December 10th, thus ending the year on a somber note. We all share her sense of loss.

Professor Ojima stepped down from the Chairmanship of the Chemistry Department at the end of October, after six and one-half years of intense efforts to revitalize and improve the levels of education and research. He was honored at a "retirement" dinner at the University Club in October. He will now be able to devote more of his energies to the building of his new Institute of Chemical Biology and Drug Discovery (ICB&DD), funded initially by the coveted NYSTAR grant. Watch for more news as this ambitious project begins to make itself felt in the field. One of the last innovations of his tenure as Chair of Chemistry was a Stony Brook Chemistry "Reunion" in conjunction with the ACS Meeting in NY in September. The cocktail reception,
with plenty of good food, was held at Stony Brook’s new Manhattan facility, and was well attended, including current Ojima Group members and alumni, as well as former undergrads, grads and postdocs from other groups.

Another exciting event that you should begin planning for is Professor Ojima’s 60th Birthday Symposium and Celebration, tentatively scheduled for late September or early October of 2005, and you are among the first to know! In addition to the Symposium and banquet, there will be a number of articles dedicated to Professor Ojima and his work in some of the leading journals. We will keep you informed of further developments as the event draws closer.

Naturally all of this new activity did not prevent him from maintaining his usual hectic travel schedule, with lecture and consulting visits both here and abroad. Among the most notable were visits to Hawaii, Croatia, Greece, and Madagascar. In Croatia Professor Ojima was hosted in Zagreb by alumnus Ivan Habus before he traveled on to Greece. Please visit his web site to see photos of his reunion with Maria Tzamarioudaki’s family and his visit to her final resting place on Crete.

Although the trip to Hawaii was a business trip for him, it was a popular destination for Ojima alumni as well. Donna Iula and her Giles, Michael Miller and his Jennifer, and Grace Chuang and her Jason all were either married or honeymooned in Hawaii this year!

The trip to Madagascar, from which Professor Ojima has just returned, actually took him into the jungle to visit the center created for conservation and study of the biodiversity of this unique region. Professor Ojima is the PI of an NIH collaborative grant to promote the collection, classification, and analysis of plant species with potential medicinal applications.

Finally, let me express my gratitude to all of you who have kept in touch, with your news, your photos, your changes of address and employers, etc. It not only makes my job easier, but much more enjoyable! I wish you all continued joy, good health and prosperity in the coming year.

Seasons Greetings

&

Prayers for Peace on Earth

in 2004!
Warm Regards,

Pat