GREETINGS OF THE SEASON!

December 2004

It’s difficult to believe that another year has gone by already! The activity levels in the Ojima Laboratory have reached new highs, with the establishment of the Institute of Chemical Biology & Drug Discovery (ICB&DD), and the plans and preparation for Professor Ojima’s birthday symposium, “The Stony Brook Symposium on New Horizons in Organic Chemistry”, to be held on September 29th and 30th, 2005.

One might suppose that all this activity would have caused Professor Ojima to curtail his usual busy travel schedule. One would have been wrong! If anything, he has been away on business even more than usual, with numerous domestic trips as well as fewer but longer stays in Italy and Japan and a brief trip to England.

Other Ojima Group members and alumni have been equally busy, with many job changes and moves, marriages, purchases of homes, and new babies, all of it too numerous to list here. We have welcomed some new members and sadly said good-by to others.

Claude Commandeur, who did his Ph.D. research under Prof. Malacria in Paris, arrived in January to suffer with us through one of the worst winters in recent memory. In May two new graduate students, Yuan Li and Ce Shi, joined their classmate, Shuyi Chen, who was already working in the labs. At the same time we celebrated the graduation of Andrew Sturm with a dual BS degree in Chemistry and Biochemistry. He has since begun pursuing his MD (or possibly MD/Ph.D. degree).

Shortly after that we were fortunate enough to have two visiting undergraduates arrive, Andrew Chang, from Harvard, and Katie Pietsch, an NSF-REU student from Concordia College. Both were highly motivated and a delight to have with us. They joined our Stony Brook undergrads, Steven Chow, Ki-Won Seo, Khurram Chaudhary, and Douglas Sturm (Yes, there IS another one!)

The lab was rounded out (bulging, in fact) with the arrival in July of an energetic group of very bright high school kids who kept us all sharp and on our toes. Nora Micheva, a sophomore from Ward Melville, and three juniors, Mary Ellen Corr (Kings Park H. S.), Tina Ho (Smithtown High), and Chris Mascioli (Oceanside)
did some impressive research and have been successfully presenting it in the national competitions.

With the approach of Labor Day, we had to begin saying reluctant “good-bye” to all the summer students, as well as our most recent Ph.D., Dr. Zihao Hua, who moved on to a postdoc position in Professor Danishefsky’s group. One bright spot in this rather sad period was the addition to our group of Kazuya Shimizu, a visiting Ph.D. graduate student from Hokkaido University. Kazuya endeared himself to the entire Ojima Group by his enthusiasm, eagerness to learn, and delightful smile. We were all very sorry that he could stay with us for only three months.

Then, in September, we lost two of our valuable postdocs, Dr. Greta Varchi (marathon runner extraordinaire!), who completed her Fellowship and returned to her position at CNR, Italy, and Dr. Bibia Bennacer, who returned to France (and to her Thomas) where she has recently obtained a new position with a pharmaceutical company.

However, these losses were partially offset by the arrival of three new members. Dr. Kan Ma was selected for the position of Director of the Analytical and Instrumentation Lab of the ICB&DD and Dr. Stanislav Jaracz, who was a student of Prof. Koji Nakanishi at Columbia, both joined the Ojima Group on October 1st. At the same time, Ilaria Zanardi also accepted a position in the ICB&DD, under the supervision of Ojima alumnus Dr. Seung-Yub Lee. After three years as a postdoc in the laboratory of Dr. David Lawrence at Einstein, Seung-Yub applied and was chosen for the position of Director of the new Organic Synthesis Lab, so he and Jiyoung and new daughter Isabel have returned to Stony Brook.

My sincere thanks to those of you who have kept in touch, with notes, emails, and phone calls. Please look at your own listing in the Ojima Group List, and let me know if there are any errors and omissions. Also, don’t forget to check the website occasionally to see what’s new in the laboratory and with Ojima Alumni. Right now you can see the photos from the Ojimas’ traditional Thanksgiving Eve party.

Throughout the year, amid all the turmoil and tragedy on the international scene and the political conflicts within the U.S. the Ojima Group has shared, encouraged, and supported each other. We have celebrated together the personal and professional joys and triumphs, and cried on each other’s shoulders and given hugs of sympathy during periods of misfortune. With persons of many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds we have gained knowledge of and
respect for each other’s beliefs, traditions, and opinions. I am proud and happy to be a part of this wonderful “family”, and wish that it could serve as a model for nations and peoples all over the world.

Professor Ojima and Kimberly join me in wishing all of you a New Year filled with joy, peace, good health, and the opportunity to make meaningful contributions.

Seasons Greetings

& Prayers for Peace on Earth in 2005!

Warm Regards, Pat

*Alaafia He Ping Paix Paz Peace Shalom*