GREETINGS OF THE SEASON!

January 2008

Professor Ojima has rather “stolen my thunder” this year, by including many of the highlights and important news from the past year in his and Yoko’s card and holiday message to you. Still, they definitely bear repeating, and I am also including the helpful “links” to the various informative sites he mentioned. As usual, I am asking that each of you check your listing on the attached Members List and, if you notice any errors or omissions in you own information or see information about another alumnus that you know to be incorrect, I would greatly appreciate your letting me know. The same is true if you know the whereabouts of someone for whom we are missing contact information.

Professor Ojima was on Research Sabbatical for the fall semester, which essentially means that he did not teach a class but continued all his other normal activities at much the same level as always. However, it did allow him more time to travel and to spend nurturing and expanding the mission of the ICB&DD. He also organized two symposia at the ACS spring meeting in Atlanta, and another at the August meeting in Boston, site of the inaugural induction ceremony of the ACS Medicinal Hall of Fame, and the huge and very festive Ojima Group Reunion and Celebration in honor of that event. (http://pubs.acs.org/journals/jmcmar/promo/awards/medi-2007.pdf and http://ojima10.chem.sunysb.edu/~ojimaweb/photogallery/pic2007/2007_Boston_Reunion.html) By my count, 37 current members, alumni and spouses attended, from as far away as France, the West Coast and Japan, and presented Professor Ojima and Yoko with some lovely gifts to commemorate his induction. I was particularly touched that he included me in the weekend and also for his gift and gifts from all of you in recognition of my ten years of service in the Ojima Group. Thank you all so much!

Most of you already know that Professor Ojima authored an ambitious number of publications, including one of the 50 most cited articles in Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry 2004-2007. Co-authors were Drs. Stanislav Jaracz, Jin Chen, and Larisa Kuznetsova. He also helped launch a new style of publication, as Guest Editor and contributor to the inaugural issue of the “conspicuous” format for Accounts of Chemical Research. Early indications are that the exciting new format, and the issue itself, are a fantastic success! Be sure to check it out! By the way, that issue also contains articles from Professor Peter Tonge, an ICB&DD member, and Dr. Bruno Chapsal, as second author of the article from Professor Arun Ghosh. You can look for yourself at: http://pubs3.acs.org/acs/journals/toc.page?incoden=achre4).

I have been delighted to receive so much exciting news from so many of you over the course of the year: weddings, job changes, promotions, new additions to your families, etc. I have tried my best to see that all of them appeared on either the Chemistry Department or Ojima Group websites, but if I “dropped the ball” with some of your good news, or if you never got around to send it, please try again (or for the first time) now. I know your friends and fellow alumni would also love to hear about it.
The year began on a mixed note, with our bidding farewell to Dr. Qing “Sunny” Huang and husband Charles, and to Dr. Stanislav Jaracz and wife, Milena, as they left to pursue exciting new opportunities. “Sunny” accepted a postdoctoral position at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University, in the Bronx and Stan is happily working at Colgate-Palmolive Company in Piscataway, NJ. We were fortunate that Dr. Jin Chen was able to stay on as a Postdoctoral Fellow until July, when she left to fill the “Ojima bench” at Dr. Danishefsky’s Bio-Organic Chemistry Lab, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. We were also happy to learn that one of our summer high school researchers, Zeynep Basaran of Smithtown H.S. was selected as a Semi-finalist in the Intel Science Talent Search. Earlier, she and the other two summer students, Kenneth and Christopher Winter, of Ward Melville H.S., had been named Semi-finalists in the Siemens-Westinghouse Science and Technology Competition, and the twins had been chosen as Regional Finalists in the Team Competition. Naturally, they appreciated the invaluable assistance of Professor Ojima and their mentors, and we were understandably proud of their accomplishments.

Soon we had more to rejoice about, when, for the first time in many years, we welcomed a different kind of addition to the Ojima Group family. In this case, not one but two current members became proud parents! A son, Justin, was born to Jin Chen and husband Jun, on March 2nd at University Hospital. A little more than two months later, on May 17th, Alex Pu Zhao was born at St. Charles Hospital, to the delight of Ray Zhao and wife Xiumin! Congratulations to both happy families!

After the departure of Kimberly Johnson-Hillock in January, a search was launched for a new Assistant to the Director of ICB&DD, and we were fortunate to receive an application from Roxanne Romero-Brockner, and even more fortunate to hire her. She joined Professor Ojima’s staff on March 1st and has been making an excellent contribution from the first day she arrived.

Then, Professor Ojima accepted two very promising first year graduate students, Chi-Feng Lin and Edison Zuniga, who began working in his laboratory in May and have quickly become key members of the group. They, along with most of the summer students, were welcomed into the Ojima “family” with the annual BBQ at the Ojima home on July 6th. A brief downpour did nothing to dampen the spirits of the group and the food and hospitality were wonderful, as usual.

There were farewells to be said, as well. Two of Professor Ojima’s senior research students, James Han and Sunku Choi, completed the requirements for their BS degrees and graduated in May. Also coming back to attend graduation and Doctoral Hooding ceremonies were Jin Chen and Sunny Huang, since they had completed their Ph.D. requirements in December. In addition, Kimberly Odynocki completed her M.S. degree requirements in early summer and celebrated by getting married before leaving for a position at Pfizer, in Groton, CT.

Meanwhile, joining or returning to the Ojima laboratories during 2007 were a group of highly-motivated undergraduate research students. Robert Robinson, Keita Morohashshi, Wen Chen, and Tolga Sevinc, all joined Rohit Repala, our Beckman Scholar, for the summer semester. Kimlong Chan, Jonathan Jafari, and Samsad Pavel were added in the fall. Since only three of the group are seniors, we look forward to their enthusiastic presence for some time into the future. By the way, Professor Ojima traveled to Irvine, CA in June, en route to Japan, for the
Beckman Scholars Symposium at which Rohit gave a poster presentation of his research. From all accounts, he did an excellent job!

In addition to the influx of Stony Brook undergraduates, we had two visiting students over the summer. Marek Figlus is a graduate student from Glasgow University, Scotland, and the 2007 winner of the Francis and Marta Johnson Scholarship. He did a very productive research project on the design, synthesis, and applications of fluororous ligands for catalytic asymmetric syntheses. Benjamin Gowen, a student at Centre College in Kentucky, came to the lab as part of the NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program. He successfully synthesized a strategically designed self-immolative disulfide linker and attached it to a drug warhead. Both of these students merged seamlessly into the group, and we were all very sad to see them go at the end of the summer.

Although he intended to accept only two or three high school students, Professor Ojima found himself unable to reject any of the four “finalists”, so all four, Alicia Chionchio, Amanda Marinoff, and Simon’s Scholars, Robert Hackett and Janelle Schlossberger, were welcomed into the lab at the end of June. Working with a team of graduate mentors, these young students threw themselves wholeheartedly into their projects, and the results of their efforts were impressive indeed. As of this writing Alicia was a Semi-finalist in the Siemens Individual Competition, Robert was an Intel Semi-Finalist, and Amanda and Janelle together won the Siemens $100,000 Grand Prize in the Team Competition! (In case you missed it, that’s the second year in a row that ALL of the Ojima high school students advanced to the semi-finals or finals of at least one of these highly competitive events! We must be doing something right.)

At summer’s end, the Ojima Group bade farewell to all of the summer students and left en masse for Boston and the previously mentioned ACS Meeting, Medicinal Hall of Fame induction ceremony, and Ojima Group Celebration and Reunion, but soon it was time for everyone to get back to their research, TA assignments, and the serious business of preparing grant proposals. With available funds constantly shrinking, the competition for what remains is becoming even more intense!

Meanwhile, Professor Ojima had one final trip for the summer, flying to Indianapolis as invited speaker for the 2nd Annual Negishishi-Brown Lectures at Purdue University. This year’s theme was "New Methods for Asymmetric Organic Synthesis". That trip was followed by two more short trips to lecture. One was to the New England Section, ACS Medicinal Chemistry Symposium and Sepracor Pharmaceuticals, Inc., (Boston area) in September. The other was to the University of Iowa in early October.

The first ICB&DD Annual Symposium on 10/12/07 (http://www.stonybrook.edu/icbdd/ICBDD-Symposium-Program.pdf), grant proposal preparations, and writing and editing chores, kept Professor Ojima fully occupied until he left for his annual lecture/consulting trip to Japan on November 1st, with Yoko accompanying him. By the time they returned, I had left for Orlando to be present for the birth of our SECOND GRANDSON! Alexander Randolph Marinaccio was born right on schedule on Monday, November 12th. Within hours of his birth he was surrounded by parents, grandparents, and “big brother” Mattingly.
Unfortunately I was unable to be back in time for the traditional Gala Thanksgiving Eve
Party at the Ojimas’, but it was otherwise extremely well attended, with a number of recent
alumni returning for the event, and, as usual, it was a fantastic evening! After one more brief
trip, to deliver a lecture at Schering-Plough in Cambridge, and lots more work preparing articles,
grant proposals, etc., the Ojimas were able to take a well-deserved one-week vacation in Hawaii
just before Christmas and to end the year on a happy note.

We have survived another year of natural and man-made disasters, genocide and
starvation in Darfur and other parts of the globe, and the constant threat of terrorism at home and
abroad. We face a prospect of continued corruption and infringement of our liberties from the
present national government, with no end in sight for our military involvement in Iraq and
Afghanistan. We have added the specter of a colossal national debt, wholesale home
foreclosures, and somber economic forecasts. Yet, despite all, I consider myself fortunate to be
an American and hope for constructive change by year’s end.

My family and I have been blessed, for the most part, with good health, a home, income
adequate for our needs, satisfying work to do, and a new generation to carry on when we are
gone. I wish the same to all of you and your loved ones in the coming year, and, most of all, a
peaceful and humane world in which to enjoy them!

Warmest regards,

Pat

Alaafia  He Ping  Paix  Peace  Paz  Shalom