Message from the Dean

IT’S BEEN A BUSY and exciting fall for the Faculty of Medicine. In October it was announced that our founding dean, the late Dr. Ian Rusted, will be inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame in 2013. Without his vision and persistence, it is unlikely that there would be a medical school at Memorial. This is an honour for the Rusted family and for the Faculty of Medicine, and recognizes our role as a world-leading, small, community-based medical school responding to the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador within a national and global context.

Another honour this fall went to Dr. Andrew Furey when he was named Memorial’s Alumnus of the Year for the work he has done in building and leading Team Broken Earth and its mission to Haiti. I was with the team last February and saw first-hand the amazing work done by these volunteers. Andrew leads by example, working tirelessly and always encouraging others on the team to do their best. He is well-deserving of this award.

There are so many things going on in the Faculty of Medicine that it is hard to touch on them all, but this issue of MUNMED offers a good overview of our many activities. Congratulations to the Health Research Unit on celebrating 20 years of improving the health of communities through research. Community engagement is central to the Faculty of Medicine, and this fits very well with Memorial’s new Public Engagement Framework which was endorsed by Senate at its meeting in September.

As dean, I am proud of the work of the Faculty of Medicine, but I’m not afraid of a little good-natured fun too. In October Dr. Don McKay, associate dean for undergraduate medical education, and I got “pied” as part of Monte Carlo fundraising activities. Here are a few fun pictures from that event. I hope everyone had a great time at this year’s Monte Carlo Charity Gala.
Alumnus of the Year award for Team Broken Earth founder

DR. ANDREW FUREY (Class of 2001), an orthopedic surgeon and assistant professor of surgery, is this year’s Alumnus of the Year for Memorial University. He is co-founder and president of Team Broken Earth, a volunteer task force supporting the relief effort in Haiti.

Under Dr. Furey’s leadership, Team Broken Earth has completed five successful missions to Haiti, providing care for more than 500 patients per week. Dr. Furey is also a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada and has published numerous research papers in the field of orthopedic surgery.

Dr. Furey has done heroic volunteer work in Haiti in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake in 2010 that leveled the capital city of Port-au-Prince, killing 200,000 people and leaving more than a million people homeless. His first medical mission was in June 2010 through the University of Maryland, where he had spent a fellowship year. He was accompanied on that first mission by Dr. Allison Furey (Class of 2001) and Dr. Will Moores (Class of 2007). On his return, Dr. Furey founded Team Broken Earth, a volunteer team of physicians, nurses and physiotherapists, who have subsequently made five missions to Haiti.

“When we first travelled to Haiti the challenges were immense,” said Dr. Furey in a Gazette interview. “There was an incredible amount of downed infrastructure, and we were working with people we didn’t know and in very tight quarters. I was truly pushing myself to my personal and professional limits. Fortunately there was an amazing team atmosphere, which was important to ensure everyone got to know each other, and learn from each other, moving toward the ultimate goal of providing care for patients.”

Dr. Furey said after that first visit he really felt a connection to Haiti and wanted to do more. “There were people from all over the U.S. and Canada on that first team. It made me recognize that Memorial University has some of the best medical professionals in the world. So I thought, why not create a team of our own? The interest was overwhelming and many people came on board immediately – we even had to turn people away.”

Dr. Furey said he is truly humbled and honoured being selected as Memorial’s Alumnus of the Year. “However, Team Broken Earth is more than just one name, it is a team, and I feel I am accepting this on behalf of all the members of our team. I am tremendously proud to be a graduate of Memorial and I’m grateful for the opportunity to give back.”

The long term goals of Team Broken Earth are to establish and fund sustainable programs throughout rural Haitian communities, to train Haitian doctors, nurses and allied health care workers, and to provide supplies, equipment and technologies to medical facilities in Haiti. Several MUN medical residents have been part of Broken Earth teams, and in February 2012 the dean of medicine, Dr. James Rourke, joined the mission.

The work of Team Broken Earth has captured the attention of the media in Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to the numerous interviews with Dr. Furey and other members of the team, NTV’s Darrin Bent accompanied the team to Haiti in February 2012 and did live reports on their work. The team has also been successful in raising money locally to finance the Haitian relief efforts.

Team Broken Earth’s next trip to Haiti will take place in January, 2013.

Dr. Will Moores, left, and Dr. Andrew Furey in Haiti (photo courtesy of Team Broken Earth).
A DONATION of $350,000 in support of the Pediatric Clinical Learning and Development Centre will provide new opportunities for medical students and other health-care professionals to learn and practise real-life scenarios.

The announcement was made Oct. 2 by Sandy Martin, vice-president (east coast), for Suncor Energy. “We use simulations in our offshore operations to ensure safer and better outcomes. With this donation, we want to contribute to better health-care outcomes for the people of our province.”

The pediatric centre is a partnership between the Janeway Children’s Hospital Foundation, Eastern Health (Janeway Children’s Health and Rehabilitation Centre) and the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

Part of the donation will be used to purchase a number of pediatric mannequins ranging from newborn through to teenager. “There are many physiological differences between children and adults and between children at different ages,” said Beverly Clarke, Eastern Health vice-president for children’s and women’s health. “Eastern Health and the Janeway look forward to working with Memorial as we develop this pediatric centre of excellence.”

The dean of medicine at Memorial, Dr. James Rourke, welcomed the partnership and the contribution from Suncor Energy. “This couldn’t come at a better time,” he said. “We are going into a major expansion and our new building will include a state-of-the-art Patient Simulation Centre with a number of simulation labs, providing experiences that will mimic real life situations.”

Dr. Rourke noted that he recently did a refresher course for obstetrics that included neo-natal resuscitation on a specialized mannequin. “These critical situations happen very rarely, but when they do, seconds matter, and team work matters. This is the value of simulation training.”

Lloyd Powell, chair of the Janeway Foundation’s board of directors, said the provision of simulation training for health-care providers will help build a culture of patient safety and quality improvement. “Suncor’s gift will provide the education needed through child and baby simulation training, which will ensure that we are providing the best possible care for the children of our province.”

Mr. Powell said that when a parent hands over their sick baby or child to a medical professional, they are counting on a miracle. “With the help of Suncor Energy, we are training our health-care professionals to ensure they can deliver those miracles.”

Following the funding announcement, dignitaries and members of the media visited the Faculty of Medicine’s Simulation Unit to observe a difficult delivery and successful neo-natal resuscitation.
Founder of Memorial’s medical school earns place of honour

THE LATE DR. IAN RUSTED will join the ranks of Canada’s distinguished medical heroes when he is inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame on May 2, 2013. He is the first native Newfoundlander to receive this distinction – Sir Wilfred Grenfell was inducted in 1997.

Dr. Rusted is being recognized for establishing Newfoundland and Labrador’s only medical school, which to this day is a world leader in medical education. What makes this singular accomplishment so remarkable is the vision and perseverance it took to establish a medical school in a poor, underserved province at a time when all of Canada’s medical schools were located in large, resource-rich cities.

Since its inception 45 years ago, Memorial’s Faculty of Medicine continues to address one of the world’s greatest health challenges: how to effectively train and inspire doctors to serve patients in rural and remote communities. Today, the legacy and spirit of Dr. Rusted lives on in over 2,000 medical graduates who are scattered across Newfoundland and Labrador and throughout the world caring for the needs of humanity.

“When I became dean of medicine at Memorial in 2004 and met with Dr. Rusted, it became clear to me that the medical school had been established on a foundation of social accountability,” said Dr. James Rourke. “From the beginning, Memorial’s medical school focused on engaging and responding to the health needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and its innovative curriculum provided learning experiences in communities throughout the province.”

Dr. William Fitzgerald, immediate past president of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and a clinical professor of surgery at Memorial, said Dr. Rusted is a sterling example of a physician, academic, scientist, humanitarian, effective administrator and team builder whose fierce commitment to his province and the country endures in Memorial’s modern and growing Faculty of Medicine.

“Dr. Rusted’s life was dedicated to improving the health of Newfoundlanders,” said Dr. Fitzgerald. “His contribution to medical education in Canada is outstanding – he built a medical school that continues to serve the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador within a national and global context.”

Dr. Tom Noseworthy, a professor of health policy and management with Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary, was in the first class of Memorial’s medical graduates. “I remember Dr. Rusted as a humble and soft-spoken man who was also an iconic figure who commanded a respect and following from many because of his inimitable and wonderful personal characteristics. He made each medical student feel special, through an innate ability to connect with individuals at a personal level and to allow them to feel understood and recognized.”

Ian Rusted was born in Upper Island Cove, Newfoundland, on July 12, 1921 and died in St. John’s on July 14, 2007. Following high school in Carbonear and St. John’s, he attended Memorial University College for a pre-medical diploma from 1938-40, followed by a BA from Trinity College, University of Toronto, in 1943. He then did a medical degree and rotating internship at Dalhousie University in 1948, followed by an M.Sc. from McGill University in 1949. Following postgraduate experience at the Mayo Foundation, he chose to return to what had now become the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Dr. Rusted was the recipient of numerous awards and honours, including three honorary degrees (Dalhousie University, 1978; Mount Allison University, 1983; and Memorial University, 2001). The 2013 Induction Ceremony to the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, presented by BMO Harris Private Banking, will be held in Halifax on May 2, 2013.
Family doctors gather for education and celebration

FAMILY DOCTORS from all parts of the province and beyond got together at the Delta Hotel in St. John’s Oct. 24-27 for the 2012 Fall Medical Education Forum, which included the Family Medicine Preceptors’ Meeting and the 24th Annual Scientific Assembly.

Activities started off the evening of Oct. 24 with six concurrent workshops for preceptors on the following topics: giving effective feedback; evaluating learners, teaching and assessing clinical reasoning; the learner in difficulty; teaching using video; and completing evaluations on-line.

The first morning session on Oct. 25 dealt with wellness. For preceptors, Dr. Derek Puddester gave a presentation on physician wellness; Drs. Neil Cheeseman and Colin Newman (both recent graduates of the Family Medicine Residency Program) concurrently presented on student and resident wellness.

Dr. Puddester (Class of 1995) is director of the Behavioural Neurosciences and Consultation-Liaison team at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario and associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Ottawa.

“I can’t emphasize enough the importance of a provincial physician health program,” said Dr. Puddester. “In the medical profession our challenges include lack of sleep, poor nutrition, limited recreation, demands on limited time and litigation. We are susceptible to burnout – about 46 per cent of physicians report being burned out, 18 per cent are depressed, two per cent think of suicide and 45 per cent have significant marital difficulties. About 25 per cent of us consider getting help but only two per cent actually get help.”

Dr. Puddester referred the doctors in the audience to the website he helped develop, ePhysicianHealth.com, the world’s first comprehensive online physician health and wellness resource designed to help physicians and physicians-in-training be resilient in their professional and personal lives.

Following Dr. Puddester’s presentation, Dr. Ivy Oandasan spoke on Demystifying the Triple C Curriculum.

“The Triple C curriculum is a competency-based curriculum that is comprehensive, focused on continuity of education and patient care, and centred in family medicine,” said Dr. Oandasan, who is the associate director of academic family medicine within the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

“The goal is to ensure that all family medicine residents achieve a high level of competence to enter active practice,” she said. “This renewed curriculum enhances what is taught, how it is taught, and how learners are assessed.”

Dr. Oandasan’s interactive workshop allowed plenty of time for participants to discuss the Triple C Curriculum and what it means to their work as preceptors. “Each of us has a purpose within a Triple C Competency-based curriculum,” she said. “This curriculum highlights the college’s vision of graduating sufficient numbers of Canadian family physicians who can provide comprehensive, continuing care within traditional family practices and within newer models of interprofessional practice.”
Dr. Kirby also noted that while the overall idea of the Triple C Curriculum is accepted by trainees, there are concerns about gaps in areas such as obstetrics and orthopedics, and how these will be addressed while training in a small rural area.

Dr. Bob Miller, former chair of the Discipline of Family Medicine, noted that there has never been a program that doesn’t graduate doctors who still have gaps in their training. “In the first five years of practice, the new doctor has to fill in these gaps. The Triple C Curriculum is better because it is more reflective.”

Dr. Sandy Macdonald, Class of 1986, was one of six residents of Nunavut honoured Oct. 9 with a Diamond Jubilee Medal. His medal was given in recognition of his service to northerners in the delivery of health care.

Dr. Macdonald has spent his medical career working in remote areas of Canada and in 2001 came to Nunavut as medical director because he felt that he could make a difference in the lives of Nunavummiut in their new territory.

“WORKING IN NUNAVUT AND HELPING TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE HAS BEEN A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR ME,” said Dr. Macdonald, who has always retained strong ties with Memorial. His experiences as a medical student at Memorial, particularly electives in Labrador, influenced his career choice.

“Nunavut needs doctors who love their work and love the north,” said Dr. Macdonald. He is enthused about the NunaFam (Nunavut Family Medicine Education) Program, launched in March 2011 in collaboration with Memorial’s Faculty of Medicine to bring medical residents and recent graduates to train in Nunavut.

“Memorial’s medical school is known for its program that trains family doctors for work in remote areas,” said Dr. Macdonald. “We have a new centre in the Qikiqtani General Hospital and are welcoming residents from Memorial.”
Awards ceremony honours doctors

**DR. ED MAYO** of Burin was named Family Physician of the Year for Newfoundland and Labrador at the Awards Dinner held as part of the Fall Medical Education Forum. The Family Physician of the Year awards recognize outstanding College of Family Physician of Canada (CFPC) members who exemplify the best of what being a family doctor is all about.

Dr. Mayo has been in practice in Burin for more than 35 years. Born in St. Anthony, he moved as an infant to Burin with his parents. After working as a teacher in Deer Lake and a licensed practical nurse in the old General Hospital, he went to medical school as a mature student and earned his MD from Memorial in 1975, followed by a year’s internship at Dalhousie University.

The town of Burin has honoured him for his long dedication to the community and created a $500 scholarship in Dr. Mayo’s name, which is awarded on an annual basis to a student who has completed their first year of university medical studies.

In presenting him with the Family Physician of the Year Award, Dr. Lyn Power, the regional physician lead in Burin for Memorial’s Rural Medical Education Network, said Dr. Mayo is known for his general expertise in many areas, including obstetrics, minor surgery and dental skills. He even once did a cesarean section on a dog, delivering five healthy puppies.

“Dr. Mayo has been a preceptor and a teacher for more than 20 years, sharing his knowledge with medical students and residents,” said Dr. Power. “He is always available to his patients, and travels by boat to remote communities.”

Two Awards of Excellence from the NL College of Family Physicians were presented Oct. 25. These Awards of Excellence recognize CFPC members who have made an outstanding contribution in a specific area including patient care, community service, college activities, teaching, research or other elements of the academic Discipline of Family Medicine.

Dr. Hulbert Silver, Grand Falls-Windsor, received an Award of Excellence for his service to the community, which includes being a member of the volunteer Fire Department. Dr. Gabe Woollam, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, received an Award for Excellence for his work with tuberculosis in Labrador.

Team Broken Earth received an Award of Recognition for its volunteer work in Haiti in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake in 2010. Team Broken Earth is the first collective of Eastern Health and Memorial University employees involved in an international relief effort. The team has become a tremendous force in Haiti, capable of caring for more than 500 patients per week. The award was presented by Dr. Jackie Elliott, president-elect of the NL chapter of the CFPC and accepted by Drs. Andrew Furey and Art Rideout.

The Dr. Craig Lovesy Teaching Award for 2012 went to Dr. Bharati Reddy (Class of 1981), a gastroenterologist and clinical assistant professor of medicine based at St. Clare’s Hospital. This award is presented annually by the Discipline of Family Medicine to a specialist in recognition of excellence in teaching family medicine residents. Dr. Reddy was previously honoured with a Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada’s 2008 Specialist of the Year Award.

Dr. Jackie Elliott (Class of 2003) received the Dr. Yong Kee Jeon Award, presented annually to a family physician for excellence in teaching family medicine residents.

The Gus Rowe Teaching Award for 2012 went to Dr. Steve Darcy (Class of 1991), who was unable to attend the ceremony. He sent a message that he was “surprised and honoured” to receive this award, which is presented each year by the family medicine residents to physician teachers in the program who are exemplary physicians, laudable teachers, and have an interest in sharing those aspects of their skills and ideals which are particularly pertinent to good family practitioners.

There were also a number of other awards from CFPC acknowledged at the Awards Dinner. The Family Medicine Researcher of the Year Award went to Dr. Marshall Godwin, director of the Primary Healthcare Research Unit, who is currently on sabbatical. Dr. Danielle O’Keefe received the D.M. Robb Research Award. Dr. Steve Darcy received a Janus Research Award and Dr. Peter Barnes of Botwood received a Janus Continuing Professional Development Scholarship. Dr. Pauline Duke received the Geeta Gupta Equity and Diversity Award for her work in raising ethnic awareness through the
MUN Med Gateway, a volunteer program for medical students to improve access to medical care for the refugee population of St. John’s. Dr. John Collingwood (deputy registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland) received life membership in the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

A number of student awards were also acknowledged. Kelly Monaghan will receive the Medical Student Scholarship. The Medical Student Leadership Award will go to Dr. Angela Wareham. The Family Medicine Resident Award for Scholarship will go to Dr. Andrea Mossman; Dr. Colin Newman, who is now a family medicine doctor in Twillingate, will receive the Family Medicine Resident Leadership Award.
Symposium examines modern professionalism in medicine

THE INAUGURAL Dr. Leslie A. Wells Lecture in Medical Professionalism took place Oct. 14 during a special symposium on professionalism in medicine, held at the Fluvarium in St. John’s. Dr. Abraham Fuks, former dean of medicine at McGill University, spoke on the New Professionalism and the Old Doctoring.

Dr. Leslie Wells and family members Dr. Mary Wells, Robert Wells and Andrew Wells, attended the symposium. Dr. Fuks began his talk with a tribute to Dr. Leslie Wells and his long career as a surgeon in Newfoundland and Labrador.

“Time, sympathy and understanding must be lavishly spent as part of a physician’s professional obligations,” said Dr. Fuks. “Medical professionalism is the basis for our social contract and acknowledges the primacy of patient welfare.”

Dr. Fuks said Canadian medical professionalism faces a challenge. “Everyone is going faster and faster, but we need to stop and listen to our patients. Physician empathy is an important component of clinical competence.”

Professionalism, said Dr. Fuks, is a concept in flux. “We need to humanize an over-professional curriculum. Professionalism is a necessary but insufficient constant for understanding the mandate of medicine.”

The symposium also included two presentations and a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Fuks.

Dr. Andrew Major, Anesthesia, presented an introduction to a reflective portfolio to foster and assess non-medical expert CanMEDS roles in an anesthesia residency program. The title of his presentation, Reflection is terrific… as long as it’s not self flagellation, was taken from a comment made by one of the residents who participated in the exercise.

“A year ago we had a Royal College Review of our Anesthesia Residency Program and some questions were raised about professionalism,” explained Dr. Major. “Dr. Sue O’Leary spearheaded this project which allowed residents to practise reflection skills in a safe environment. We were surprised at how positive the feedback was – not one single resident was negative about using the portfolio, and it was effective in bringing professionalism forward as an issue.”

Clinical clerk Sandra Cooke-Hubley gave a presentation on social networking use among medical students. Her survey of 167 medical students in the first three years of the MD program found that 90 per cent of students used Facebook, the world’s largest social network, with over 75 per cent using it multiple times a day and 90 per cent logging in at least once a day.

Ms. Cooke-Hubley said it was encouraging that 97 per cent of the students surveyed used Facebook’s privacy setting, although 70 per cent said it was not secure enough and were concerned that patients might access their information.

The formal part of the day’s program ended with a panel discussion on professionalism in medicine for the 21st century. The panelists were Drs. Donald Boudreau, McGill; Dr. Ayelet Kuper, University of Toronto; and Dr. Pier Bryden, University of Toronto.

Participants in the professionalism symposium (from left): Dr. Abraham Fuks, Dr. Leslie Wells, Dean James Rourke, Dr. Ayelet Kuper, Dr. Pier Bryden, Sandra Cooke-Hubley, Dr. Donald Boudreau, Dr. Jim Connor (organizer of the symposium) and Dr. Andrew Major.
Founders Award for geneticist

**DR. JANE GREEN**, a professor of genetics in the Faculty of Medicine, has received the 2012 Founders Award for Excellence in Medical Genetics from the Canadian College of Medical Geneticists for her significant lifetime contributions to the college and to the genetics community in Newfoundland, Canada and beyond.

Dr. Green started compiling pedigrees on Newfoundland and Labrador families with hereditary loss of vision in the late 1970s. Since then she has been involved in most studies of human genetic disease in this province in one capacity or another. Her seminal work on hereditary cancers in the province has spawned several large grants and research endeavours but even more important, it has saved lives, prevented suffering and significantly reduced the provincial health budget.

When she moved with her family to Newfoundland in 1968 (having originally studied *Drosophila* genetics with Dr. David Suzuki at the University of British Columbia), there were no geneticists at Memorial. With three small children, it wasn’t until 1978 that she began to work in the genetics field in Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the next decade she worked with ophthalmologist Dr. Gordon Johnson, to provide diagnoses to individuals and families with hereditary vision loss, and to determine the prevalence and distribution of all hereditary eye diseases in the province.

They held weekly Ocular Genetics clinics at the Health Sciences Centre, and outreach clinics in rural hospitals or nursing stations, including Lark Harbour, Placentia, Carbonera, Clarenville, Burin, Twillingate, Corner Brook and Port Hope Simpson. In the 1980s, Dr. Green was involved in clinical research on two rare conditions that were more frequent in this province: Bardet-Biedl Syndrome (BBS) and Newfoundland Rod-Cone Dystrophy, both characterized by severe retinal dystrophy. Subsequently she collaborated with molecular geneticists to identify the genes and mutations relevant to these conditions and other hereditary eye disorders.

One day in the 1980s, a family with a rare hereditary cancer syndrome, Von Hippel-Lindau disease (VHL), was referred to the Ocular Genetics Clinic. Immediately Dr. Green worked with a group of physicians to develop a screening program for early diagnosis and treatment of each type of tumour in VHL. This became the model for development and implementation of screening for other hereditary cancer syndromes including hereditary endocrine tumours and the hereditary colon cancers.

It has always been Dr. Green’s desire to help families, and to explain to them and their health care professionals the basis for their disorders. Over her career Dr. Green has talked with thousands of family members, hundreds of affected individuals and dozens of doctors, nurses and health-care providers. She is also an enthusiastic teacher of medical students and medical residents.

Dr. Green has put Newfoundland on the map with her international collaborations, but has always stressed the need and desire for human molecular genetics to be carried out at Memorial University. Her work on hereditary colon cancer paved the way for the Colorectal Cancer Study, a collaboration between Memorial University and Mt. Sinai Hospital, Toronto, and she was also a key member of the Atlantic Medical Genetics and Genomics Initiative which integrated genetic discoveries and the potential impacts on the provision of health-care services.

In 2008 Dr. Green received a Knowledge Translation Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). This award allowed her to visit many of the 28 rural hospitals in the province during 2009-10 to give presentations on the implications of genetics and hereditary diseases to health-care professionals and the public, particularly conditions of relevance to each geographic area.

Dr. Green attended the 2012 Canadian College of Medical Geneticists annual meeting in Saskatoon in October, where she was presented with the Founders Award by college president, Dr. Bridget Fernandez, who is also the chair of the Discipline of Genetics at Memorial. Dr. Green gave a presentation titled *Connecting the Dots*, outlining her career in medical genetics research and clinical care in Newfoundland and Labrador.
National immunology annual meeting held for first time in St. John’s

THE IMMUNOLOGY and Infectious Diseases (IID) group in the Faculty of Medicine organized and hosted the 25th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Immunology (CSI), which was held for the first time in St. John’s from June 15-18 and attracted approximately 250 participants.

Organizers from Memorial were Dr. Sheila Drover, chair, and Drs. George Carayanniotis, Sherri Christian, Michael Grant, Kensuke Hirasawa, Mani Larijani and Rodney Russell. Drs. Grant and Hirasawa served as workshop and poster co-ordinators; Dr. Drover handled sponsorship; Dr. Christian was chair of the travel awards committee; Dr. Larijani was volunteer co-ordinator and Dr. Russell organized social activities. Drs. Drover, Grant and Hirasawa worked on the program book production.

The meeting had a comprehensive and exciting scientific program consisting of three major symposia, four workshops and two poster sessions. The symposium, Environment, Genetics and Immune Regulation in Autoimmune Disease, proposed and co-chaired by Dr. George Carayanniotis, included presentations by national and international speakers on Type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmune thyroiditis. An overriding theme in all the talks was how delineation of genetic and environmental factors that contribute to autoimmune pathology might be used to manipulate immune responses as a treatment modality.

Other symposia were Immunometabolism and From Hematopoiesis to Immunity. The keynote address was given by Dr. Diane Mathis, Harvard University, whose topic Treg control of non-immunological processes provided a fascinating insight into the link between the immune system and metabolic disorders such as obesity.

The four workshops were co-chaired by Dr. Sherri Christian (Leukocyte Development, Activation and Signaling); Dr. Ken Hirasawa (Host-Pathogen Interactions: Innate Immunity to Adaptive Immune Responses); Dr. Mani Larijani (Immune Mediated Diseases: Tolerance, Autoimmunity and Inflammation); and Dr. Rodney Russell (Tumor Immunology and Immunotherapy). On the last evening, there were special presentations commemorating the 25th anniversary of the society.

The meeting was an excellent venue for trainees to present their research findings. Three Memorial graduate students, Yumiko Komatsu (supervised by Dr. Hirasawa), Panayota Kolypetri (supervised by Dr. Carayanniotis) and Ahmed Mostafa (supervised by Dr. Drover), were selected to give an oral presentation. The IID group was particularly pleased to see Justin King (supervised by Dr. Larijani) win the prestigious CSI Top Poster Award, highlighting the excellence of MUN IID graduate research on a national scale (see story page 14).

“Based on feedback from delegates and exhibitors, the meeting was an overwhelming success,” said Dr. Drover. “The weather co-operated, allowing delegates to participate in social activities and many stayed to an extended holiday in the province.”

Dr. Carayanniotis said the IID group are hopeful that Memorial University will “continue to be a pole of attraction for future CSI meetings.”
GRADUATE STUDENTS Kayla Holder and Hassan Kofahi (co-supervised by Drs. Grant and Russell); Ahmed Mostafa (supervised by Dr. Drover); and Jessica Benkaroun, Justin King, Mahdis Monajemi and Mussa Suliman (all supervised by Dr. Larijani), presented posters. Here are some of these graduate students with their posters.
Commemorative medal for liver specialist

**DR. THOMAS MICHALAK**, Canada Research Chair in Viral Hepatitis/Immunology, has received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of his contributions to the fight against liver diseases. He was also recently honoured as one of the 2012 Top 4 in Science in the *International Top 100 Magazine*.

Dr. Michalak heads up one of the world’s leading centres for research on hepatitis viruses. The hepatitis B virus (HBV) is the most common blood-borne microbial pathogen and the main causative factor behind development of liver cancer, while the hepatitis C virus (HCV) is the major cause of chronic hepatitis in western countries.

Dr. Michalak has a longstanding interest in the field of viral hepatitis spanning more than three decades. He has published widely on the natural history and on the molecular and immunological mechanisms of the pathogenesis of hepatitis. Among others, he has discovered new categories of clinically silent chronic hepatitis B and C viral infections, and has done extensive work into the means by which these viruses invade and replicate in the host’s immune system and spread.

Dr. Michalak was among the first to report evidence of persistent hepatitis B virus infection continuing for years in patients with clinical recovery from hepatitis B. Later, he demonstrated that this occult form of infection can be reactivated and transmitted to virus naïve hosts, raising concern over its clinical and epidemiological implications. His team has also uncovered evidence that low quantities of infectious hepatitis C virus can persist for a very long time after recovery and that the immune system is the invariable site of the virus persistence. In most recent studies, his group has discovered that HCV infects T lymphocytes, a main subpopulation of immune cells, by utilizing a CD5 molecule that is uniquely expressed by these cells, and that the virus can be fully eliminated from these cells by activation of the cell’s own immune responses.

Because hepatitis B virus grows with great difficulty in a cell culture, Dr. Michalak studies hepatitis B and the pathological consequences of HBV infection using its close relative found in some subspecies of woodchucks. He has established a large research colony of Eastern North American woodchucks at Memorial and with this worldwide rare animal model he is making ground breaking progress in hepatitis research. This natural model of human disease is also an invaluable tool for the evaluation of new treatments designed by the biotechnology industry and pharmaceutical companies against hepatitis B and associated liver cancer. Several of these novel agents have been evaluated on the preclinical level by Dr. Michalak’s research group at Memorial.

PhD student wins first place poster award in national competition

**JUSTIN KING**, a first-year PhD student in Dr. Mani Larijani’s laboratory in the Division of Biomedical Sciences, was awarded the first place poster prize at the Canadian Society for Immunology annual conference held this summer.

Mr. King’s poster and presentation were judged by professors from universities across Canada and ranked first amongst 73 posters entered into the competition. Mr. King’s poster was based on his undergraduate B. Sc. (Hons) project completed in Dr. Larijani’s lab in April 2012 and work during his first two months as a PhD-candidate graduate student.

The project explores the structure-function relationships of the enzyme activation-induced cytidine deaminase, which is involved in immunodeficiency and cancers such as leukemia/lymphomas. Mr. King’s work in Dr. Larijani’s lab during the past year has contributed to one published manuscript, one submitted manuscript and two manuscripts currently in preparation.

This research is supported by a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) operating grant and Mr. King holds a PhD fellowship from the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute.
Doctor to the Paralympics

**DR. EAN PARSONS**, associate professor of family medicine, put his expertise in sports medicine to good use during a very special “summer vacation” as one of the doctors for the 2012 Canadian Paralympic Team at the London Paralympics which took place Aug. 29-Sept. 9.

It was the second time Dr. Parsons has been a doctor for Canada’s Paralympic team – he was also in Athens in 2004.

Dr. Parsons was one of two Newfoundlanders at the London Paralympics – swimmer Katarina Roxon of Kippens was one of 145 Canadian athletes who competed in 15 sports. In her best event, she placed fifth in the women’s 100-metre breaststroke, less than five seconds away from winning bronze.

As one of three doctors to the team (cycling had their own doctor), Dr. Parsons found himself treating head colds, intestinal upset, shoulder injuries and the occasional squashed finger. Before the games began, the team’s doctors sat down with each athlete and reviewed their medications. Any athlete who won a medal was tested for doping.

Dr. Parsons observed that Paralympic athletes are becoming more and more professional. Support personnel include physical therapists and psychologists, and there was a fully-equipped clinic at the Olympic village.

Some of Dr. Parsons’ most vivid memories were watching blind soccer, blind fencing, blind running and wheelchair rugby. As one of the minority number of able-bodied persons, he found himself constantly amazed at how the athletes coped – he recollects watching an armless man putting on his socks with his toes, and realized that this was a regular activity for him.

Parasport emerged shortly after World War II and was introduced to newly injured war veterans as a way to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into their community. A few short years later, a variety of parasports were created for people with a disability, and in 1948 the first official sport competitions were held.

“IT’S INSPIRING TO WATCH THESE ATHLETES,” HE SAID. “I WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE THERE.”
Gairdner lecture explores meningitis in Africa

**DR. BRIAN GREENWOOD** presented the 2012 Gairdner Lecture on Oct. 15 at the Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Greenwood is the 2012 Canada Gairdner Global Health Laureate and the Manson Professor of Tropic Medicine at the London School of Hygiene and Tropic Medicine in the UK.

His talk described the effects of meningitis in Africa, a devastating disease with a high rate of infection marked by regular epidemics. Management of this disease requires providing prompt and effective treatment, but particularly important is prevention through vaccination.

Dr. Greenwood told his audience about the Meningitis Vaccine Project (MenAfriVac), established in 2001 with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which aims to produce an affordable, serogroup A meningococcal conjugate vaccine for use in Africa. The achievements of this project are the development of an improved conjugation technology and vaccine manufacture in India.

Dr. Greenwood's wife, Dr. Alice Greenwood, also gave a presentation on Oct. 15, titled Mealy Mountain Madness and Other tales: Labrador and Nigeria Fifty Years Ago. Early in her career she worked out of northwest Labrador for a year. Some of the medical problems she saw were tuberculosis, malnutrition, pneumonia and measles. After a year in Labrador, she went to Ibadan in western Nigeria. Some of the similarities she saw between Labrador and Nigeria were malnutrition, although in Labrador it was mostly rickets and scurvy while in Nigeria it was kwashiorkor (a form of malnutrition that occurs when there is not enough protein in the diet) and marasmus (a severe deficiency of nearly all nutrients). She also saw a lot of measles, pneumonia, polio, malaria, snake bite and smallpox.

Rural health in India improving due to work of MUN grad

**DR. CHANDRA SANKURATHRI,** who received an honorary degree from Memorial on Oct. 19, was also a guest of the Faculty of Medicine when he presented a Community Health lecture on Oct. 17 titled Rural Health in India: Empowerment by Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation – A 20 Year Journey.

Dr. Sankurathri is a Memorial graduate who responded to the tragic loss of his wife, son and daughter in the 1985 Air India bombing by dedicating his life to help alleviate the suffering of others. He established the Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation as a registered charity in Canada in 1989 and the Sankurathri Foundation in India in the same year.

Within the Sankurathri Foundation, Dr. Sankurathri manages an eye hospital, the Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology, and the Sarada Vidyalayam high school. These charities provide free education to hundreds of rural children and have provided free eye care services to almost two million patients, including restoring eyesight to nearly 200,000 patients through free cataract surgeries.

In his talk, Dr. Sankurathri said India is a land of contradiction. “Seventy-five per cent of people live in rural areas and 90 per cent are poor, deprived of electricity, potable water and lack of access to quality education and affordable medical care.”

To address these problems Srikiran offers access to affordable eye care to all regardless of their socio-economic status. To those who attend eye screening camps, Srikiran provides free eye examinations, and if a cataract surgery is recommended, provides free transportation, free surgery with an intraocular lens, free medications and free accommodation and food while they are in the hospital.

Dr. Sankurathri’s talk was co-sponsored by the Global Health Program of the Faculty of Medicine and the Division of Community Health and Humanities. Donations can be made at www.msmf.ca. For local information contact Dr. Vereesh Gadag at 709 777 6221.
Medical icon honoured by doctor’s association

THE BOARDROOM of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) has been dedicated in honor of the late Dr. Nigel Rusted. The ceremony took place Oct. 3 at the NLMA House in St. John’s.

A photograph of Dr. Rusted was unveiled by Dr. Tony Gabriel, president of the NLMA, and Joan Rusted, daughter of Dr. Rusted. Members of the Rusted family and the NLMA Retired Physicians Group, founded by Dr. Rusted, were among the guests.

The photograph, taken by Paul Daly, will hang inside the boardroom above a commemorative plaque. The wording on the plaque starts with a quote from Dr. Rusted: “My attitude always was patients first and the hell with anybody else. If you're going to treat them, treat them as you want to be treated yourself.”

The plaque describes Dr. Rusted as an icon of the medical profession in Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada. The description reads as follows: “Dr. Rusted was a family physician and the last of a pioneer generation of surgeons who laid the foundations of surgical specialty care in the province. He travelled by ship to hundreds of isolated coastal communities, bringing medical care to areas that totaled 14,000 patients. He was also the first to perform several operations in the province in an era preceding antibiotics. Before retiring at age 80, he performed more than 9,000 surgeries, including hare lip and cleft palate reconstruction surgery for more than 650 children. Prior to Medicare, he performed more than 1,500 operations free for those too poor to afford it. He is highly regarded as a man of generosity and compassion and as a physician who always put his patients first. He is forever revered for his extraordinary and lasting impact on the medical profession.”

Placing country doctors in a golden age of medicine

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR carrying a simple black bag is a powerful medical icon. In the 2012 Dr. Nigel Rusted Lectureship in Medical Humanities, held Nov. 16, Dr. Sasha Mullally examined the history of country doctors, rural medicine and the origins of contemporary challenges of providing remote health care.

This was the first memorial Dr. Nigel Rusted Lecture. Dr. Rusted died March 18, 2012, at the age of 104. His passion for the medical humanities prompted him to launch the Dr. Nigel Rusted Lectureship in Medical Humanities in 2003.

Dr. Mullally is an associate professor of history at the University of New Brunswick. She is author of Unpacking the Black Bag: Country Doctors and Rural Medicine in Canada and the United States, 1900-1950 (forthcoming, University of Toronto Press).

“The general image of a country doctor is an older male, part of the small town or community, who came to a patient’s home to help with whatever ailed the patient,” she said. “He operated as a single person, not a team.”

Dr. Mullally said little is known about medical care in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. “Doctors in this time period were the first generation to use file cabinets, but the files were destroyed upon their death. We get information from their writings and biographies, but first-hand stories can give more information than edited versions.”

The tales of the work of country doctors are often colourful and filled with adventure. Dr. Mullally said these stories can inspire future medical students. “They are inspiring stories, larger than life at times.”
Celebrating 20 years of community engagement

WITH THE GOAL of improving the health of communities in Newfoundland and Labrador through research, the Health Research Unit (HRU) in the Division of Community Health and Humanities has successfully completed many challenging projects over the last 20 years. On Nov. 7 this success was celebrated through displays of ongoing and past projects, and a luncheon at the Bally Haly Country Club.

Dr. David Vardy, a professional associate with the Harris Centre, talked about his connections with the HRU, particularly as a member of the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador. He was on the advisory committee for the 2003 study titled Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Newfoundland and Labrador “A Constant Struggle.” The HRU study identified the need for effective programs for adults with autism. “This study was pivotal, and enabled the Autism Society to go on to open the Autism Centre,” he said.

Dr. Gary Kachanoski, president of Memorial, congratulated the HRU on its anniversary. “The HRU is an important interface between the community and the Faculty of Medicine, and community engagement is central to your work in improving the health of communities. This fits very well with Memorial’s new Public Engagement Framework, which was endorsed by Senate at its meeting in September.”

The impetus to form the HRU started with a call in the early spring of 1991 from the medical consultant with the provincial Department of Health to an epidemiologist in the Division of Community Health. He wanted to find out what factors contributed to the high rate of cesarean sections in Newfoundland. Dr. Sharon Buehler, honorary research professor and founding director of the HRU, recalls a contract for a general survey of section rates across the province was offered.

Dr. Buehler said this request provided an ideal opportunity to think about a research unit within the division, particularly as epidemiology was often a core discipline in community projects. “It was a chance to enlist the breadth of expertise in the division to provide evidence which could inform health-policy decisions and ultimately benefit the community. There was also the potential to increase research activity among the faculty and develop research relationships among the division faculty as well as those outside the division.”

Meetings of the faculty and research support staff of the then Division of Community Medicine led to the formation of the Health Research Unit. A contract between the Department of Health and the HRU was signed and the first study was undertaken.

It soon became clear that research personnel needed to be hired. Bonnie James took on the job of manager of the HRU and Ann Ryan joined shortly thereafter, providing expertise in research design, survey development, interviewing and facilitation skills, and both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Linda Longerich became manager in 1995, bringing both administrative and research skills to the unit.

“When I first started working for the HRU in 1994 we had maybe three or four projects,” said Ms. Ryan. “Now, it’s not unusual to have 12 or more projects at different stages of development, some at the proposal writing stage, some at the ethics application stage, or the data gathering and analysis stage, and some at the report writing and dissemination stage.”

Dr. Vereesh Gadag, professor of biostatistics, is the current faculty director of the HRU. He said the work done by the unit
helps to build a sense of appreciation in the community about what research is. “Because we involve the community, we are seen not as ‘ivory tower’ academics but as people who can become engaged. This results in a win-win situation.”

Almost all faculty members in the Division of Community Health and Humanities are members of the HRU, and the director is elected from among them once every three years. “As a division, our level of expertise has grown and we are able to take on more research projects,” observed Dr. Gadag. “When we are approached about doing a research project, Ann and I talk about it and see who would be appropriate faculty members to take it on. Sometimes we will draw in faculty members from other areas of the university, such as nursing, education, geography and political science, but we always make sure at least one member of the HRU is involved.”

Accountability to the community has always been a cornerstone of the HRU’s work. Looking back over two decades, Dr. Buehler commented that a hallmark of the work of the HRU has been the interaction with community members. “Reports are in plain language. Often the relationships developed in projects have led to subsequent involvement with initiatives of the sponsor agency or institution.” Ms. Ryan said the community members on all projects are active throughout the study, not just at the beginning and end. “They are wholly integrated in all aspects.”

The HRU is currently involved in 12 projects, including a multi-center clinical trial to determine if Adacel® vaccine is safe and effective when given as a repeat dose 10 years later; a project on the psychosocial impact of ARVC (arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy) and sudden death in Newfoundland families; and assessment of palliative care needs of people with end stage renal disease.

Dr. Shree Mulay, associate dean for Community Health and Humanities (CHH), is proud of the work done by the HRU. “This research unit connects the expertise and research capabilities of the faculty in CHH with the population health research needs of the community. The HRU was engaged with the community long before the university embarked on the Community Engagement pillar in its strategic plan.”

If you have a project or research question you would like to discuss with the HRU, they can be contacted through their website at www.med.mun.ca/hru/ or call 709 777 8385 or call Dr. Gadag at 709 777 6221.
New Faculty

**DR. CHRIS G. SMITH**
**DISCIPLINE OF SURGERY**

Dr. Chris Smith is an assistant professor of surgery and staff surgeon with Eastern Health. He earned his MD at Memorial in 2005 and completed a general surgery residency at Memorial in 2011, during which time he also earned a graduate diploma in clinical epidemiology research. From July 2011 to June 2012 he completed a fellowship at the University of Ottawa in minimally invasive surgery and bariatric surgery.

Dr. Smith’s main research interests are in the areas of bariatric surgery and the role of laparoscopy in the treatment of gastrointestinal malignancies. His 2011 poster titled Predictors of outcomes following Roux en Y gastric bypass surgery at the Ottawa Hospital was accepted for poster presentation at the 2012 scientific session and postgraduate course of the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons and at the annual scientific forum of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons (CAGS). He has also presented similar research at a variety of national and international meetings.

Dr. Smith has shown a strong interest in teaching and is currently a member of the residency training committee in the Discipline of Surgery. In June 2010 he received the CAGS Resident Award for Teaching Excellence and in May 2009 he received the Outstanding Resident Teaching Award.

**DR. CATHERINE HICKEY**
**DISCIPLINE OF PSYCHIATRY**

As a specialist in geriatric psychiatry, Dr. Catherine Hickey works out of the Dr. Howard Strong Geriatric Psychiatry Day Hospital, located at the Miller Centre. She collaborates with other team members in developing comprehensive treatment plans for seniors suffering from ailments such as dementia, depression and delirium.

Dr. Hickey earned her MD at Memorial in 1999 and did a residency in psychiatry at Dalhousie University, finishing in 2004. She then went to Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston to complete a fellowship in psychosomatic medicine (medical psychiatry). After this, she focused mostly on geriatric psychiatry and has worked in Halifax and Vancouver.

In 2009 Dr. Hickey returned to Newfoundland. She has a strong interest in medical education and has completed a certificate in this area through the University of Dundee. She is now enrolled in their diploma program, with plans to complete a master’s degree in medical education in the near future.

In addition to geriatric psychiatry, Dr. Hickey is interested in Intensive Short-term Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP), a form of short-term psychotherapy developed by Montreal psychiatrist Dr. Habib Davanloo. She is actively involved in Dr. Davanloo’s ongoing training programs in Montreal. She plans to develop a curriculum in ISTDP for senior psychiatry residents and other professionals working as psychotherapists in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**DR. SUSAN AVERY**
**DISCIPLINE OF FAMILY MEDICINE**

Dr. Susan Avery is an assistant professor of family medicine, based at the Shea Heights Health Centre, one of four clinics operated through the Discipline of Family Medicine. She is a member of a shared care obstetrical team offering prenatal, delivery and postpartum/neonatal care. Her responsibilities include teaching clinical skills to medical students as well as supervising family medicine residents.

As one of four family medicine doctors doing obstetrics, Dr. Avery and her colleagues follow their pregnant patients individually but share responsibility for deliveries. She is particularly enthusiastic about introducing family medicine residents to obstetrics.

Although 70 per cent of her time is for clinical work, Dr. Avery does have some protected time for teaching and research. She is part of a research team looking at services available to youth and young adults in a small urban community who are living with mental health and addiction issues. Lead investigators on this project are Dr. Lisa Bishop, School of Pharmacy, and Dr. Steve Darcy. Drs. Cheri Bethune and Norah Duggan, Shea Heights Health Centre colleagues, and Rob Sinnott, Social Work, are also involved with this project.

“This is a collaborative project between new and experienced researchers from medicine, pharmacy, social work and the community,” she said. “We believe that the development of a tailored mental health and addiction program using a co-ordinated community-based strategy can achieve long-term benefits on population health and well-being.”
This research project has received a Janus Training Grant from the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and a development grant from the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research.

Dr. Avery earned her MD at Memorial in 2009 and went on to complete her family medicine residency in 2011. She is a registered member of the Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nation Band.

DR. ANDREW SMITH
DISCIPLINE OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

As an assistant professor with the Faculty of Medicine’s new Discipline of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Andrew Smith brings with him particular interests in Point of Care Ultrasound, online medical education and non-invasive monitoring.

Since the start of 2012, Dr. Smith has developed and implemented a multidisciplinary Point of Care Ultrasound Program (PoCUS) for residents attending Memorial. This program provides discipline specific ultrasound training, establishes minimum training standards, and seeks to incorporate residents into the teaching program as educators upon completion.

Dr. Smith is also working to establish research capacity within the PoCUS field. He is the local principal investigator for both national and international trials and has several local medical education research projects ongoing including a recent award from the Medical Research Endowment Fund (MRF). This award will evaluate the effectiveness of Memorial University’s PoCUS program to train residents’ skills pertaining to ultrasound-guided central venous catheter placement. In addition, he has helped form the Atlantic PoCUS Research Group, a collaborative partnership between Dalhousie University and other emergency departments in the Atlantic region.

Dr. Smith’s first degree at Memorial is in engineering and he also completed a master’s in engineering. He graduated with his MD in 2005 and went on to complete his family medicine residency in 2007 and Special Competence in Emergency Medicine in 2008. He is currently a full-time ER physician at both St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital and the Health Sciences Centre in St. John’s.

LINDA KIRBY retired from Memorial July 27 after 24 years. She first started working at Memorial in 1976 but left in 1978, then returned a year later where she met her husband in the Department of Physics. She left again to travel in 1980, returning in 1981. She worked in the Discipline of Family Medicine (then known as Family Practice) for about six months, then went to the Registrar’s Office and then to the Department of Folklore. In August 1988 she returned to Family Medicine after a maternity leave.

“The baby was three weeks old when I interviewed for Family Medicine, and they waited for me to finish my leave so that I could start work with them!” she recalls. “The rest is history. I worked in the same position, as program coordinator of the Residency Program until June 2011, when I took on working with the Project for Enhanced Rural and Remote Training (PERRT). The project is for five years, but I told them that I would work with it for the first year, to get things up and running.”

Linda said she loved working with the Discipline of Family Medicine. “One of my favourite parts of the job was working with the residents. For many years after they left I would meet them at the Canadian Family Physicians of Canada meetings all across Canada. And with the PERRT the project I was lucky enough to travel to Iqaluit in Nunavut twice.”

SHEILA COURRISSH retired from Memorial on Sept. 28, 40 years after she first started working at the university. In 1972 she took a position with University Works (now Facilities Management) and a year later moved on to the Comptroller’s Office (now Financial Services). In 1974 she moved to Personnel (now Human Resources) where she stayed until 1978, when she decided to stay home to be a full-time mom. She returned to Memorial in 1988 and in 1989 joined the Faculty of Medicine, where she held a variety of positions in the Finance Office. She is well remembered by faculty and staff for her competence and patience in handling financial matters.
New associate dean for research and graduate studies

THE NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN for research and graduate studies in the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Reza Tabrizchi, knows that it is a difficult and challenging time for researchers seeking funding. In his 20-year career as a cardiovascular researcher in the Faculty of Medicine, he has seen funding opportunities shrink for biomedical researchers.

“The gold standard in medicine is a grant from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR),” he said. “But funding from the CIHR has shrunk and it is more difficult for researchers to obtain grants as the CIHR has taken on a broader mandate for health-care funding, shifting its emphasis from biomedical to other areas of research such as health care delivery, policy and services.”

What are the solutions? “In order for us to get good research funding we need to relate how our research will benefit the community and we have to articulate that relationship to the public,” said Dr. Tabrizchi. “Research funding will increase as the public demands it but we need to be better communicators with the public on the benefits of our research.”

The new associate dean said the research community in the Faculty of Medicine may need to regroup in order to identify its strengths and capitalize on these strengths. “We need to re-energize ourselves in some way and at the end it will benefit the community. It is important to be able to identify specific areas that we are good at, and optimize our efforts in order to obtain research funding that is directly linked to benefiting the community at large, but we also need diversity.”

Because of the spectrum of research in the Faculty of Medicine, which includes researchers in the Division of Community Health and Humanities, some researchers are able to apply for funding through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Funding is also available from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), although this funding agency is cutting back on grants that are perceived to be health-related rather than natural sciences in content.

Although it is difficult to obtain major funding, Dr. Tabrizchi noted that there is seed money through the Office of the Dean and through grant competitions from the Medical Research Endowment Fund (MRF), including the Cox award. “There are also charitable foundations that fund research in many areas, such as the Kidney, Heart and Stroke, Diabetes and Liver Foundations, and starter funding at times is made available from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI).”

Having collaborations is also important in applying for funding. “It seems that a lot of funding agencies are looking for collaborations across the board,” said Dr. Tabrizchi. “For me it is important to be in touch with faculty members to identify possible collaborations within our own faculty and in other areas of the university and other universities. If I can facilitate this, it is a way for me to go forward.”

The Faculty of Medicine’s research enterprise will receive a big boost when the new building is completed and the genetics labs and offices move into new space starting in 2014. As space is freed up in the Health Sciences Centre, new labs and office space will be available for new faculty.

One change Dr. Tabrizchi would like to see in the Office of Research and Graduate Studies is having someone, perhaps on a contractual basis, who could review grants. “There are certain ways of writing a grant that are important, and it would be useful to have someone in-house to read over grants – the readability of a grant application is really important.”

Although administrative responsibilities are new to Dr. Tabrizchi, he feels that his long experience as an academic and researcher will allow him to give something back by facilitating the research of colleagues.

Dr. Tabrizchi first came to Memorial as a post-doctoral fellow in 1988, after completing his undergraduate degree in pharmacology at the University of Sunderland in the U.K. and his senior degrees at the University of British Columbia (UBC). His first academic appointment was as an assistant professor at UBC as a Scholar of Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. He returned to Memorial in 1996. His expertise is in the field of integrative cardiovascular pharmacology and his research interests are in the areas of pharmacology and the biology of blood vessels in normal and disease states.
Chair for Discipline of Genetics

DR. BRIDGET FERNANDEZ has been appointed chair of the Discipline of Genetics. It’s a role she’s quite familiar with, having served as acting chair during most of the last two years.

Dr. Fernandez earned her MD at Memorial in 1994, followed by a five-year residency in medical genetics at the University of Toronto. She is director of the Eastern Health’s Medical Genetics Program and is an associate professor of genetics and medicine at Memorial. She just completed a two-year term as the president of the Canadian College of Medical Genetics and is a member of the steering committee for a pan-Canadian exome sequencing project called FORGE (Finding of Rare Disease Genes).

Her research interests include familial pulmonary fibrosis, autism spectrum disorders, familial aneurysms and clinical dysmorphology. She has been a co-investigator on several Genome Canada grants which allowed her to collect DNA samples and clinical information from more than 400 Newfoundland families containing an autistic child and from over 30 Newfoundland families affected with familial forms of pulmonary fibrosis.

“The next few years will be an important strategic time for the Discipline of Genetics as we move towards being housed in the Craig L. Dobbin Genetics Research Centre in 2014,” said Dr. Fernandez. “The new building will bring together discovery scientists and applied health researchers and will optimize and grow the capacity for human genetics research at Memorial and within Eastern Health.”

Dr. Fernandez explained that future growth is critically dependent on ensuring that the Discipline of Genetics contains faculty with the right mix of expertise, and on creating core research infrastructure in biobanking, data management and high throughput genetic and genomic analyses.

Building critical mass is vital, said Dr. Fernandez. “We have eight faculty members who have primary appointments in the Discipline of Genetics – five are laboratory-based scientists, two are clinicians and one is a PhD with a long career in clinical research. We have created several interdisciplinary research teams in areas that include cardiac and ocular genetics, deafness, colorectal cancer, pulmonary fibrosis and autism. These teams are committed to returning clinically relevant laboratory findings to families that participate in knowledge translations and exchange.”

She noted that in the area of applied health research, “we have important collaborations within the Discipline of Medicine, particularly with Clinical Epidemiology.

The entire Faculty of Medicine has been asked to work towards the introduction of an updated undergraduate medical school curriculum. “The unique challenge we face in genetics is related to integration of our specialty into the mainstream practice of medicine,” said Dr. Fernandez. “The scope of genetic testing has already broadened from purely monogenic disorders to tests for disease susceptibility and ones that guide drug therapy. This means that everyone who practises medicine will need to be comfortable with the complexities that surround genetic testing. In many cases, these new genetic tests will be ordered by family physicians and other specialists. As a discipline, we need to think about how to best prepare our new medical school graduates for the practice of genomic medicine.”
In this issue of MUNMED we continue our feature on some of the publications of our graduate students.

**DAVID JEROME**, a M.Sc. student supervised by Dr. Qi Yuan (Neuroscience), is first author of the article titled Interaction of NMDA receptors and L-type calcium channels during early odor preference learning in rats, published in the *European Journal of Neuroscience*. Mr. Jerome explained that rat pups are born deaf and blind; during the early days of life they depend highly on their sense of smell to find their mother (and through her, food, shelter and protection). “Pups thus provide an excellent model in which to study early olfactory learning,” he said. “Our research looked at the role of a voltage-activated calcium channel (called an L-Type Calcium Channel or LTCC) on the development of early olfactory memories. We showed that these LTCCs are found in specific cells of the olfactory bulb – the same cells we already know are involved in the development of early olfactory memories. We then performed behaviour experiments in which we taught pups to like a novel odor while infusing drugs into this region of the olfactory bulb. By infusing drugs that activated specific proteins, or inhibited the function of specific proteins, we were able to test how these specific proteins are involved in the development of early olfactory memories. Our research demonstrated that LTCCs are involved in the development of early olfactory memories, and that they work alongside other calcium channels called NMDARs. Finally, some of our experiments suggested that LTCCs contribute to early odor learning by promoting the release of neurotransmitters, and increasing communication, between olfactory bulb neurons involved in this learning.”

**MATTHEW LAMONT** is a master’s student of Dr. John Weber, Neuroscience, and first author of the article, The role of calcium in synaptic plasticity and motor learning in the cerebellar cortex, published in *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*. Mr. Lamont explained that the cerebellum is important for motor co-ordination, as well as motor learning and memories. “Motor learning is believed to occur in the cerebellar cortex, in the form of synaptic plasticity,” said Mr. Lamont. “These memories are postulated to be stored in the form of long-term depression at parallel fiber synapses with Purkinje cells (PC). However, in the past few decades many studies have demonstrated that several other synapses in the cerebellar cortex are modifiable and synaptic plasticity at these various synapses could determine the overall output signal of PCs which would affect motor function. The physiology of synaptic plasticity in all cells appears to be dependent on calcium to some extent. In this review the authors discuss various types of synaptic plasticity in the cerebellar cortex, the role of calcium in these forms of plasticity, and the potential resulting effects on motor learning.”

**MARIA LICURSI**, a PhD student supervised by Dr. Ken Hirasawa, Cancer and Development, is first author of the article titled Promotion of viral internal ribosomal entry site-mediated translation under amino acid starvation, published in the May 2012 issue of the *Journal of General Virology*. She explained that in mammalian cells the most common mechanism to initiate protein synthesis is called cap-dependent translation. “However, this mechanism is severely impaired under cellular stress conditions. There is a second mechanism in which an RNA element known as Internal Ribosome Entry Site (IRES), recruits the cellular machinery involved in protein synthesis.” Ms. Licursi said that the objective of this study was to determine how cellular stress regulates viral IRES-mediated translation. “After screening different types of cellular stresses, we have found that foot and mouth disease virus (FMDV) and encephalomyocarditis virus (EMCV) IRES-mediated translation was promoted during amino acid starvation. We then identified mTOR-4E-BP pathway to be involved in the regulation of FMDV and EMCV IRES-mediated translation. In order to understand how protein synthesis is regulated, it is essential that we continue to investigate the mechanisms that underlie IRES-mediated translation.”

**MAHDIS MONAJEMI**, who was a M.Sc. student co-supervised by Drs. Mani Larijani and Michael Grant in the Division of Biomedical Sciences, is the first author of Emerging complexities of APOBEC3G action on immunity and viral fitness during HIV infection and treatment, published in *Retrovirology*. This review article
summarizes current literature on how DNA-mutating enzymes that can alter the genome of the HIV virus can at once help the immune system and the virus, highlighting some of the future questions and challenges of moving the field forward towards being able to determine whether such agents can be developed as anti-HIV therapies. In addition to this review article, her M.Sc. research has led to another manuscript which is currently in the final stages of preparation.

For the review article, there was also a collaboration with a biomedical artist who generated a cover figure image.

In the book, Reproducing Women, the authors look at how women experience reproductive health and how knowledge about health issues is transmitted from one generation to the next.

The authors are Dr. Marilyn Porter, professor emerita in the Department of Sociology, and Dr. Diana L. Gustafson, associate professor of social science and health in the Faculty of Medicine.

Utilizing sociological and feminist lenses, they argue in this book that women experience reproductive health as a part of their entire life story rather than as discrete medical problems.

The book draws together stories and interviews with three generations of women across 24 families. The authors examine women’s experience of their reproductive lives in order to uncover how women’s experience is rooted in the family and among generational relationships between mother, daughter, grandmother and granddaughter.

By placing women’s biological and embodied experiences, including issues such as menarche, contraception, sexual intercourse, childbirth and menopause, in a social and cultural context, women’s broader roles in social reproduction are revealed.

Reproducing Women is published by Fernwood Publishing.

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By placing women’s biological and embodied experiences, including issues such as menarche, contraception, sexual intercourse, childbirth and menopause, in a social and cultural context, women’s broader roles in social reproduction are revealed.

Reproducing Women is published by Fernwood Publishing.

The Fluorspar Mines of Newfoundland: Their History and the Epidemic of Radiation Lung Cancer, he tells the history of Newfoundland’s fluorspar mines from their founding to the last shipment of fluorspar in 1990 and declaration of bankruptcy a year later. He focuses on the health hazards experienced by the miners, and how the mining companies, workers, government, and health services came to terms with the unfolding human tragedy.

Two rich deposits of fluorspar, a mineral used in the production of aluminum, steel, non-stick coatings and fire retardant clothing, were discovered in the early 1930s on the southern tip of Newfoundland. Two mines were established and by mid-century were major employers in St. Lawrence. By the 1950s physician Cyril Walsh noticed a marked increase in cases of cancer in the miners and by the late 1960s nearly 20 per cent of St. Lawrence households had lost a family member to lung cancer.

Dr. Martin’s book also covers such matters as the improvement of methods for dust quantification and radiation surveillance in the mines, battles for compensation, and the influence of the St. Lawrence case on the development of labour law in the province.

The Fluorspar Mines of Newfoundland is published by McGill-Queen’s University Press.
Immunology refreshment for residents.

WITH FUNDING FROM the Medical Graduates’ Society Wallace Ingram Award and the assistance of nine graduate students, Dr. Vernon Richardson, professor of biomedical sciences, has developed a number of immunology self-instructional training modules.

“These were developed for distance use by medical residents to refresh and expand their immunology knowledge, which is all but forgotten after several years,” said Dr. Richardson. “Immunology is presently taught mainly in the first year of undergraduate medical studies, and after that only in a few medical programs. Yet it is unquestionably a rapidly expanding field with clinical relevance that is exceptionally important in all disease processes.”

Each training module was developed with the idea of refreshing basic immunological principles and expanding their clinical application to disease processes, diagnosis and treatment. Each module consists of a brief pre-test and feedback, a 30-minute instructional unit, a post-test, giving feedback to the residents, and a questionnaire. The modules were evaluated for their usefulness and acceptability by 10 medical residents who provided useful feedback on module usage and performance. A questionnaire gave an evaluation of the degree of acceptance and usefulness of the module components. Part of the evaluation was to assess if this form of educational delivery through D2L at distance was acceptable to the residents as means of refreshing and expanding their knowledge and interest in immunology at this later stage in their medical training. Data collected is presently being evaluated.

As an incentive to participate in the evaluation process, entry into a prize draw to win an iPad was given for each module evaluated. The winner of the prize draw was Dr. Anita Hegg, a first-year family medicine resident.

“Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in evaluating modules designed to enhance training in immunology,” said Dr. Hegg. “I was eager to volunteer for this study as I felt my training in this area was brief and the knowledge I once obtained quickly forgotten. The majority of my understanding in immunology came through my undergraduate degree in science as well as a few lectures in my pre-clerkship years at the Faculty of Medicine. However, I found the teaching, while useful for providing a frame work, was not particularly clinic-oriented. The modules developed for this study covered a variety of topics and helped bridge the span between book knowledge and real life. Many were based on clinical presentations of immunological disorders and detailed the laboratory workup recommended for evaluation. The quizzes provided at the end of the modules helped solidify the shared information. I found this method of learning very useful, the content base applicable and would recommend these modules to other residents.”

Dr. Richardson said it is hoped to soon open up these modules to other residents and medical students through D2L. Anyone interested in viewing them can contact Dr. Richardson at vrichard@mun.ca.

Daniel Wadden, Peyvand Amini and Farrell Cahill.

MUN obesity research well represented at national workshop

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY was well represented at the Canadian Obesity Network’s 7th Annual Obesity Boot Camp which took place in Quebec this past summer. Doctoral candidate Farrell Cahill and masters’ students Danny Wadden and Peyvand Amini, supervised by Dr. Guang Sun, were chosen to attend the intensive educational seminar.

The obesity boot camp is designed to expose the top young obesity investigators in Canada to the latest research
within various paradigms of obesity. Training consisted of six days of intensive obesity knowledge dissemination ranging from endocrinology, cell biology, genetics, and energy regulation to epidemiology, public health, clinical management and health policy. Prestigious obesity researchers from across Canada such as Dr. Angelo Tremblay (Canada Research Chair in Environment and Energy Balance at Laval University), Dr. Ayra Sharma (chair in Obesity Research and Management at the University of Alberta), and Dr. Denis Richard (Merck Frosst/CIHR Research Chair in Obesity Hôpital at Laval Research Centre), provided extensive educational workshops while also chairing student research presentations and discussions.

This Canadian institution receives many applications from across Canada to attend this educational seminar, but only the top 24 applicants are awarded attendance each year. The Obesity Boot Camp training award is valued at approximately $5,000 per attendee. For more information regarding the Canadian Obesity Network and their educational Obesity Boot Camp visit www.obesitynetwork.ca.

National program supports grad research on HIV

TWO GRADUATE STUDENTS in the Faculty of Medicine are being supported in their research through Universities Without Walls (UWW), a national training program for emerging HIV researchers.

Rachel Landy and Rana Aslanov are UWW Fellows this year, following in the footsteps of PhD student Zack Marshall who was a UWW Fellow last year. The program provides funding to support research training activities and includes bi-weekly synchronous webinars with leading HIV researchers in Canada, a field mentoring placement with a mentor in a related field and individualized support.

Ms. Landy is a PhD candidate in Community Health, working with supervisors Drs. Natalie Beausoleil, associate professor of social science and health, and Dr. Mario Blaser, Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies. Ms. Aslanov is a PhD candidate in clinical epidemiology, working with supervisor Dr. Gerry Mugford.

“Universities Without Walls is a great opportunity,” said Ms. Landy. “It’s connected me with research that I identify with and offers a stipend to cover costs associated with training plus on-line seminars and presentations.”

Ms. Aslanov agrees that being a UWW Fellow offers many opportunities, such as networking with HIV scholars across Canada. “It’s a great way to get to know people across Canada. The program also matches us with a mentor and provides travel money to meet with the mentor.”

The two UWW Fellows said that the communication network of UWW will be of benefit long after the nine-month fellowship. “We will continue to be involved,” said Ms. Aslanov. “It opens doors to the future.”

Ms. Landy noted that the UWW program is very strong in community-based research. “I’m thrilled to be a fellow, there is always staff available to help through UWW.”

Mr. Marshall, last year’s UWW Fellow at Memorial, is studying the ethical inclusion of adolescents in Canadian health research, which will provide recommendations for renewed policy direction. His supervisors are Dr. Chris Kaposy and Dr. Fern Brunger, Community Health and Humanities.

“Being a UWW Fellow was an incredible experience,” said Mr. Marshall. “From my perspective the main benefit was the chance to exchange ideas with community-based HIV researchers from across Canada during bi-monthly webinars and several in-person meetings. In addition, my field mentorship placement with Dr. Mark Tyndall in Ottawa provided a phenomenal opportunity to apply community engagement principles to the development of a large prospective cohort study that will engage 1,200 people in Ottawa who use illicit drugs. I have also used this experience to connect with local researchers working in this area and am part of a CIHR Planning Grant application headed up by Dr. Margaret Dechman from Cape Breton University, and a co-investigator with the REACH CBR Collaborative Centre in HIV/AIDS.”

Dr. Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco is the program manager of UWW, which is funded by a CIHR Strategic Training Initiative in Health Research from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. He said that of the 12 UWW Fellows this year, it is significant that two are from Memorial. “They are excellent people and we pride ourselves in getting only the best for this program.”

For further information about UWW, visit www.universitieswithoutwalls.ca.
Measuring turnover in the physician workforce

BUILDING ON the work she has done on physician workforce issues in Newfoundland and Labrador, Dr. Maria Mathews is undertaking a new project to study the stability of this workforce. This project is supported by a $20,000 development grant from the Medical Research Endowment Fund (MRF).

Dr. Mathews, professor of health policy/health care delivery in the Division of Community Health and Humanities, explained that the measurement of physician to population ratio is often used to compare the supply of physicians in different provinces and countries.

“Although it is easy to calculate, this measurement provides little information about the actual workforce that serves a population,” she said, noting that some of the questions not covered by the physician to population ratio include turnover, the number of unfilled positions, and the needed number of different types of physicians.

To find answers to these questions, Dr. Mathews will develop new measures such as stickiness, inflow and outflow, in order to consider and compare the stability of the physician workforce and the characteristics of the physicians who enter, stay or leave the workforce in a given time period. “We will look at communities that are ‘sticky’ or retain their physicians, versus communities with high turnover, and examine how physician turnover affects health and wellbeing.”

Dr. Mathews said the measurements will be calculated for geographic regions and for physician specialties. “To validate these measures, we will compare the stickiness measures in each local area to physician availability data collected in previous surveys such as the Canadian Community Health Survey. Our study will provide a valuable tool that will help manage physician supply in different regions in Canada.”

With the help of additional funding from the dean of medicine, Dr. James Rourke, the 2012 MRF Research Development Grants have been increased to $20,000. Dr. Mathews said this funding will allow her to do initial work on measuring physician workforce, which can lead to getting larger national grants for further research in this area.
Measuring the value of a multidisciplinary Point of Care Ultrasound Program

DR. ANDREW SMITH, assistant professor of emergency medicine, has developed a multidisciplinary Point of Care Ultrasound Program (PoCUS) for residents attending Memorial. Now, with the help of a $20,000 development grant from the Medical Research Endowment Fund (MRF), he will undertake an evaluation of this training.

Dr. Smith said that ultrasound is a valuable tool being increasingly integrated into a multitude of different disciplines in clinical medicine. “As a safe and non-invasive imaging modality, ultrasound is quickly becoming the standard of care in a variety of procedures. For instance, there is clear evidence to suggest that the use of ultrasound to guide central line placement, decreases the number of attempts, increases success rates, and decreases complication rates thus playing a major role in improving patient safety.”

Other benefits of Point of Care ultrasound are that there is no radiation, the exam can be performed within minutes, and can easily be repeated. Given the tremendous benefits associated with the use of PoCUS, Dr. Smith said that the implementation of formal PoCUS training programs for residents would be an asset to residency education, benefiting both patients and the local health authority.

“Although formal PoCUS training programs for residents are well established within the Discipline of Emergency Medicine, very few formal training programs target multiple clinical disciplines, and no programs are available which incorporate residents into teaching and administration,” he explained. “To address these gaps in PoCUS education, we have developed a multidisciplinary program which provides resident’s discipline-specific training in bedside ultrasound using the CanMEDS framework with the goal of improving patient safety and decreasing health care costs.”

The implementation of the ultrasound-guided central lines component of the PoCUS program consists of online learning, practical training, development of competence, and subsequent knowledge transfer via teaching. To be granted certification in ultrasound guided central line placement, residents must place a total of 10 ultrasound guided lines and the quality of their line insertions must be documented by their supervisor using the PoCUS Program Vascular Access Log. “After successfully completion, residents are strongly encouraged to become teachers and mentors for other residents within the program,” said Dr. Smith.

The MRF-funded evaluation project will involve residents completing a pre- and post-survey which will assess residents’ knowledge and comfort in placing lines before the beginning of the online learning component and six months after completing the practical training session. Knowledge and skill gains will be assessed by examining the difference in scores from the pre- and post-survey of the resident’s self-assessed competence regarding central line placement, which will be compared to objective evaluations of performance.

The post survey will also ask residents to rate the effectiveness of the program in developing CanMEDS roles as well as rate their experience and confidence in teaching other residents how to place ultrasound guided central lines. “Trends in competency development and mechanical complication rates as the program transitions from being taught primarily by faculty members to residents will be assessed using data from the PoCUS Program Vascular Access Log,” said Dr. Smith. “Trends in the rate of catheter-related bloodstream infections over time, using standardized hospital data, will also be monitored as part of this project.”

Dr. Smith said the MRF grant will foster research in both medical education and clinical applications pertaining to Point of Care Ultrasound at Memorial. “This funding will improve our success in obtaining further grants from both local and national agencies. An unforeseen benefit of this particular MRF grant is the increased multidisciplinary collaboration in education, research, and clinical care as we strive to provide the best educational experience for residents while improving patient safety at the same time.”
Tales from the 2012 International AIDS Conference

“DRUGS COST PENNIES, AIDS COST LIVES!”
My throat is getting hoarse from shouting again and again.
I don’t stop.
“DRUGS COST PENNIES, AIDS COST LIVES!!”

The street is a sea of protest banners heading towards the White House.
The air energized with the shouts, screams and cries of a thousand protestors,
all asking for one thing: to end AIDS. I’m in the thick of it, realizing to
myself this is how it feels to be a part of something big, a pivotal moment in history. I
was part of change.

The protest was one of thousands of activities that happened during this year’s International AIDS Conference, deemed AIDS2012.

AIDS2012 took place in Washington D.C. from July 22-27 and, as you can imagine, it was the largest gathering of leaders in HIV/AIDS advocacy, research, policy-making and business from across the world. A total of 23,767 to be exact!

AIDS2012 was a pretty big deal. First of all, the International AIDS Conference hasn’t been in the United States for the last 22 years, and with good reason: until 2009, the United States had a federal ban on the movement of HIV-positive (HIV+) persons. So basically, if you were HIV+ and hoping to get to Florida – forget it.

Secondly, 2012 is a critical year for HIV/AIDS. Society has finally started to emerge on the winning side of the fight against HIV/AIDS. HIV rates in many countries have stabilized, anti-retroviral therapy has significantly reduced mortality, more people with HIV have access to adequate healthcare and, as Michel Sidibé, UN AIDS executive director, stated at the conference: “The number of people receiving anti-retroviral treatment worldwide is now larger than those without.”

But we still have a long, long way to go towards eradicating HIV/AIDS.

If we are to continue the trend, global efforts against the virus must continue. To do that requires money and this is where the problem lies. HIV/AIDS transmission rates are declining but so too are financial donors. If donations continue to slip, there are fears that current trends will reverse and we will go back to a world of out-of-control infection rates and AIDS related mortality. So while the conference had an overly optimistic tone, it was not without caution.

My involvement was not happenstance. Myself, a third-year medical student at MUN, and Carolyn Travers, second year at McGill, received the opportunity to represent the International Federation of Medical Students’ Association (IFMSA) at AIDS2012. The team was composed of about 10 medical students from across the world, so having two Canadians in the team was pretty impressive. Go Canada!

Ok, I’ve told you how successful AIDS2012 was; let’s talk about the negative:

While conference speakers praised the United States for lifting the travel ban against people living with HIV/AIDS, they failed to mention current U.S travel bans affecting IV drug users and sex workers – two of the three most critically affected populations in HIV/AIDS (the third being men who have sex with men).

Consider this: At the last International AIDS Conference in Vienna, thousands of sex workers and IV drug users from across the world participated in creating programs and policies that directly affected them. At AIDS2012, there were less than several hundred. And while those present put a commendable effort in making the issue known, the conversation was altogether avoided by high-ranking speakers. As a result, AIDS2012 emerged as a conference “about them, without them.”

As a whole, however, AIDS2012 did prove to be a unique, life-changing experience for myself, Carolyn, the IFMSA team and, I’m sure, its other participants. Although IV drug users and sex workers were denied proper representation, the fact that the United States opened its doors to AIDS2012 demonstrates the progress the U.S and the rest of the world are achieving in improving world collaboration in HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, AIDS2012 provided exciting advances in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and family planning; all of which will change current medical practice. Regardless what specialty you choose to pursue, interacting with people living with HIV/AIDS and high-risk populations is inevitable. So let’s stay mindful and open to our patients’ sexual health and well-being. As one conference participant asked me to tell you guys regarding HIV patient care: “You will get further faster if it is a partnership.”
Keep Calm and Study Medicine

**EVERY YEAR** members of the first-year medical class get Orientation Week T-shirts that they wear to various events through the week – mostly as an easy way to identify each other, since everyone's a new face. For this year's design, the Orientation Committee decided to do a play on the Keep Calm and Carry On poster and its parodies.

“Funnily enough, while being a current trend in design, the shirt concept plays well into the idea of student wellness,” explained Chris Earle, a member of the first-year class. “A friend of mine who does screen printing printed the shirts pretty well at cost, and I lent him a hand.”

New website shares life stories and lessons

**MUN ALUMNUS** Nikhil Joshi (Class of 2012) has created a new website, Letters for the World, to offer the opportunity to share life stories and lessons from people from all walks of life.

The writings of Dr. Mohamed Ravalia, assistant dean for the Rural Medical Education Network, have been posted to this site, and his letter can be found at [www.lettersfortheworld.com/2012/10/25/such-a-long-journey/](http://www.lettersfortheworld.com/2012/10/25/such-a-long-journey/).

Other members of the Faculty of Medicine and alumni are invited to write their own letters and submit to this new site.

**Of Note**

**DR. JAMES ROURKE**, dean of medicine, has been elected chair of the Canadian Medical Forum (CMF), which consists of the heads of all of Canada's major medical organizations. CMF meets twice a year to do strategic pan-Canadian thinking and planning. As chair, Dr. Rourke will have a key role in setting the agenda and moving the direction forward.

**DR. SUSAN MACDONALD**, associate professor of medicine and family medicine, has won a Moonbeam Children's Book Award for her novel *Edge of Time*. The Moonbeam Children's Book Awards recognize the best in North American children's and young adult writing and illustration. An expert panel of educators, librarians, booksellers and reviewers selected Dr. MacDonald's book as the Gold Medal winner in the category of fantasy/sci-fi young adult fiction – making it one of only five Canadian books to receive a Moonbeam Award this year. *Edge of Time* is published by Breakwater Books.
News from Obstetrics and Gynecology

RESIDENTS AND FACULTY members in the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynecology made a good showing at the 68th annual clinical meeting of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (SOGC) of Canada, held June 20-24 in Ottawa.

Memorial residents won the 2012 PPROM Award (Program Promotion by Residents in Obstetrics for Medical Students) for promotion of the specialty of obstetrics and gynecology to medical students. The PPROM Award recipients are selected by participants in the medical student track at the SOGC annual clinical meeting. The award, selected during the residency fair, is given to the students’ favourite program. MUN residents previously received this award in 2010.

DR. LACEY HARDING (Class of 2012), now a resident at the University of Toronto, was first runner-up for the Best Health Care Student Poster for a poster titled Carnitine-Acylcarnitine Translocase Deficiency and Pregnancy – A Case Report. This is the first report of a pregnancy in a woman with carnitine-acylcarnitine translocase deficiency, a rare life threatening metabolic disorder of mitochondrial fatty acid beta oxidation. With close follow up by a team of specialist physicians including obstetricians, maternal fetal medicine specialists and geneticists, as well as strict patient compliance, a successful pregnancy occurred in a woman with this rare metabolic disorder. This information will be a valuable contribution to the literature for women of reproductive age with this disorder who may be considering pregnancy.

DR. JOAN CRANE won Best Obstetric Poster for her poster Neonatal and Maternal Outcomes of Infants Born at 23 Weeks’ Gestation. This study, using data from the Canadian Perinatal Network (CPN), evaluated the outcomes of mothers and babies born at 23 weeks’ gestation in 14 Canadian tertiary perinatal units (including the Women’s Health Centre at Eastern Health). Infants born at this gestation have a high mortality rate (89 per cent). Even among survivors, the chance of serious morbidity is very high (95 per cent). Mothers of these infants are also at risk of morbidity (36 per cent). This information can be used to counsel women who present at risk of preterm delivery at 23 weeks’ gestation so that they can make informed decisions regarding management. Further research is needed to identify interventions that may improve outcomes.

DR. JOHANNE LACELLE (Class of 1991) received the Regional Achievement Award (for Atlantic Region) from SOGC. Recognition of Service awards are granted to individuals who contribute their time and expertise to SOGC committees. This award highlights the importance of volunteer member involvement in the overall success of the SOGC.

Since completing medical school and postgraduate training at Memorial nearly 20 years ago, Dr. Lacelle has dedicated herself to a family practice in St. John’s, with a special interest in women’s health and obstetrics. Outside of her own clinic, she contributes to a variety of community programs and initiatives, including working at Memorial’s Student Health Services and at Planned Parenthood Canada, as well as regularly putting in time at a local women’s health clinic. She is a member of a provincial committee for the revision of the Newfoundland and Labrador antenatal record, and has been a member of the obstetrics and gynecology committee of the Medical Council of Canada since 2005, including serving as chair for the past five years.
Resident Research Day

THE DISCIPLINE OF Obstetrics and Gynecology held their 23rd Annual Resident Research Day on June 1, 2012. There were 19 projects presented by residents and guest presenters including Dr. Mike Ripley from Halifax. This year’s guest speaker was Dr. Elizabeth Dicks. There were three residents who shared the top award for best presentation. They were Drs. Karen Splinter, Sean Murphy and Jennifer Salata.

“Resident Research Day is a day where academic and clinical worlds meet to provide an opportunity for our residents to present their research findings,” said Dr. Krisztina Bajzak, resident research director. “It’s an inspiring occasion for learning and networking within the context of research. This next generation of clinician scientists will undoubtedly make significant contributions to new knowledge and promote improvements in our ability to deliver quality health care to the women of Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond.”

The next Resident Research Day for the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynecology will be held May 31, 2013.

In Memory

DR. RICHARD HARLEY, Class of 1985, passed away suddenly on March 2, 2012. He is well-remembered by his friends and colleagues as a caring radiologist with a passion for salmon fishing.

Dr. Tony Tavenor, a gastroenterologist in Corner Brook, knew Richard since Grade 1 and they went through medical school at the same time. “Richard was unusual in a great way. He was profoundly curious. He pursued his passions aggressively and lived life to the fullest.”

Working with him on a daily basis, Dr. Tavenor said he was an unusual radiologist for his time. “He took time to talk to people, and patients remembered his name.”

Dr. Ed Mercer, a radiologist in Corner Brook, said one of the reasons he came to practice in Corner Brook in 2000 was because of Dr. Harley. “He was a colleague and a friend and he was instrumental in helping recruit five MunMed graduates to work in Corner Brook. Richard was well respected as a radiologist – he was eccentric but well read, and well-versed in world events.”

Dr. Mercer recalls that Dr. Harley’s loves were his wife Kelly, his Harley Davidson motorcycle, his dogs and salmon fishing on the Lomond River. In memory of him, his friends and family have placed a plaque near the Lomond and buried some of his ashes there.

“He was a practical radiologist and practical physician – he knew his patients’ names and where they came from,” said Dr. Mercer. “He treated everyone equally and was well-loved by the technologists.”

Dr. Peter Hollett first met Dr. Harley as a radiology resident and was professionally associated with him and his father through the Nuclear Radiology Program. “I remember he had a passion for dogs and fly fishing, every summer he’d take a month’s holiday and park his trailer by the Lomond River.”

Dr. Harley leaves to mourn his wife Kelly (nee Burt); his father, Dr. Brian Harley Sr.; sisters Alison (Doug O’Keefe), Caroline (Tom Alteen) and Jacqueline; and many other relatives, friends, colleagues and co-workers.

DR. MICHAEL MACKIN, Class of 1984, passed away peacefully on June 19, 2012 at the Saint John Regional Hospital with his family at his bedside. He was a member of the teaching faculty of family medicine for Memorial University and Dalhousie University for many years. He was a well-respected physician both by his peers and his patients. He made housecalls, worked weekly in the Cardiac Surgical Unit, and worked in the Emergency and Palliative Care Departments. He resided in Rothesay with his immediate family, Dr. Connie Robinson, and their three sons Matthew, Joshua and Christian. He also leaves to mourn his three siblings Kathy Hogan (Michael), Kevin Mackin (Louise), Mark Mackin (Brenda), his parents, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and six nephews, and his brother-in-law, Ron Robinson.
Outstanding faculty recognized

**DR. PROTON RAHMAN** has been named University Research Professor, the most prestigious award Memorial gives for research. Dr. Rahman is a professor of medicine in the Division of Rheumatology, associate dean for clinical research in the Faculty of Medicine and a staff rheumatologist at Eastern Health. He is internationally renowned for his research related to the genetics of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and has identified several novel susceptibility genes in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, as well as new genetic markers for disease progression and pharmacogenetics in other inflammatory rheumatic diseases.

Dr. Rahman has also pioneered the development of the Newfoundland Genealogical Database. This software allows researchers to study the genetic component of disease through a robust database of family pedigrees spanning from the late 1700s to the mid-1900s. This multi-functional resource is being used to identify the genetic component of disease and is aiding clinical decision making. He is also interested in the genetic basis of drug response and has identified novel variants that predict response to biologic agents.

Dr. Rahman has an exemplary publication record. In total, he has published over 150 articles and nine book chapters. He has been awarded over $15-million dollars in peer-reviewed funding as a principal investigator on a variety of projects. It’s also noteworthy that while advancing his own research agenda, Dr. Rahman continues to carry out a full roster of clinical duties, teaches in the medical school, supervises graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, serves as associate dean for clinical research in the Faculty of Medicine and also plays a key role in multiple national and international research networks. His expertise and passion are well-known, and he has been recognized for his research with many awards, including the President’s Award for Outstanding Research in 2003.

**DR. MANI LARIJANI**, assistant professor of immunology and infectious diseases and oncology in the Division of BioMedical Sciences, received the 2012 President’s Award for Outstanding Research. His research focuses on DNA-mutating processes which modify human and viral genomes. These processes are involved in immune responses, evolution of viruses and cancers, particularly very aggressive leukemia and lymphomas.

Research in Dr. Larijani’s lab ranges from understanding the molecular mechanisms of these DNA mutating enzymes, to how their activity is regulated inside cells and finally how they impact diseases such as immunodeficiencies, AIDS and cancer. His work has been published in journals such as Nature, Molecular Cellular Biology, the FASEB Journal, Immunogenetics, and Retrovirology.

When Dr. Larijani first arrived at Memorial in 2009, he so impressed the Medical Graduates’ Society, they awarded him the 2009 Dr. Wallace Ingram Award for New Faculty. Since, he has received operating funds and a salary award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. In addition, he holds grants from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, Canadian Foundation for AIDS research and the Research and Development Corporation of Newfoundland.

Dr. Larijani’s research has also been recognized nationally and internationally through invitations to speak at various universities, as well as to serve on several national and international grant-review panels. He has recently been invited to chair the grant review panel for the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute.

**DR. JIM CONNOR**, John Clinch Professor of Medical Humanities and History of Medicine, received the President's Award for Outstanding Teaching. He joined the Faculty of Medicine in 2004 and is appointed to the Discipline of Psychiatry, cross-appointed to the Department of History.

Dr. Connor pursues authentic learning experiences that are truly interdisciplinary. His experience in medical school informs his history classes, making them realistic; his historical background adds depth, context and intellectual meaning to the immediacy of medical education.

As an instructor in medicine and a historically-oriented humanities scholar, Dr. Connor empowers his students to be critical thinkers and active learners, and to acquire essential skills for physicians in their roles as medical expert, communicator, scholar and professional.
MGS reunion 2012

THE ANNUAL Medical Graduates’ Society (MGS) Reunion was held July 27-28 at the Faculty of Medicine. This year over 100 graduates of the MD classes of 1977, ’82, ’87, ’92, ’97, and 2002 enjoyed reconnecting for social events as well as a Saturday morning CME session. On Friday night during the alumni reception in the medical school foyer, the Dr. Wallace Ingram Award was presented to Drs. Jill Allison and Shree Mulay. This year over $11,000 raised by our alumni for the Ingram award will support a Summer Institute in Global Health for undergraduate medical education.

Dr. Allison, global health co-ordinator, and Dr. Mulay, professor and associate dean of the Division of Community Health and Humanities, proposed the summer institute, which will be held for four weeks at the Patan Academy of Health Sciences in Nepal.

The Faculty of Medicine recently established a Global Health Office to co-ordinate international electives. “The Global Health Initiative at Memorial is committed to providing an enriched understanding of health equity, the social, political and economic determinants of health, and a wider scope for health advocacy and human rights in the context of the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam guidelines on social accountability for physicians as advocates,” said Dr. Allison.

Dr. Mulay explained that these skills are important in medical practice, given the diverse population in Canada and in the context of globalization, work force mobility and the diverse social and cultural issues in health. “We believe that the development of a Summer Institute for Global Health at the Patan Academy of Health Sciences in the summer of 2013 would be an ideal way to deliver this curriculum,” she said.

In the past, several students have done electives at the Patan Academy and this summer three medical students will be doing their pre-clerkship at the Patan Hospital with identified preceptors.

Dr. Mulay said the summer institute program will provide a model for global health electives for the future. “While the plan is to create a program that is self-sustaining and regularly available, we propose this program as a pilot project in the early development of a global health program of education in the Faculty of Medicine at MUN.”

The course outline for the summer institute includes a week-long focus on each of four areas: the social determinants of health; health care delivery; social medicine as a philosophy; advocacy and engagement; and social accountability.
THE EXECUTIVE of the Medical Graduates Society was elected at the AGM this year. Membership includes Alan Goodridge, president, Bridget Picco, past president, and board members Ford Bursey, Lynn Dwyer and John O’Keefe. We will be delighted to have more members and this year will be calling upon representatives for each class with an upcoming reunion to sit on our board.

Our wine tasting event will return again in January 2013. Our attempt at a beer tasting event did not receive much support so it will be wine tasting from now on. This will be a great opportunity for a mini-reunion for the locals and to learn a little about wine on the side.

Meanwhile keep in touch. Any news can be sent to MUNMED c/o sharon.gray@mun.ca. We look forward to hearing from you.

President
Medical Graduates’ Society

Educational offerings at the 2012 MGS Reunion

THE ONSITE accredited CME program on Saturday morning provided an opportunity for everyone to learn and develop new skills. Presenters included Dr. Keith Bowering on the Pharmacotherapy of Type 2 Diabetes; Dr. Ann Colbourne, speaking on Tele-health Enhanced Care Insulin Pump Program; Dr. Richard Eddy on the Growth and Development of CT Colonography; Dr. David Marsh on Engaged Medical Education in a Northern and Rural Context; and Dr. Adam Natsheh on Dermatology for Everyone. Following the CME sessions, the Dean’s Luncheon was held at North Bank Lodge in Pippy Park. This was an informal event with activities for the children and time to unwind and reconnect with classmates.

On Saturday evening alumni attended class parties hosted by a representative of each class. Many thanks to Dr. Hubert White (‘77), Drs. Cathy Bradbury and Peter Hollert (‘82), Dr. Gavin Duffy (‘87), Dr. Catherine Seviour (‘92), Dr. Lesley Turner (‘97), and Dr. Colleen Kirby (‘02) for organizing these parties.

Special invited guest, retired professor Dr. Brian Payton enjoyed chatting with Dr. Domino Chaulk, Class of 1977.

YOU COULD BE MISSING OUT ON IMPORTANT UPDATES!

Please update your contact details so we can keep in touch. Have you moved? Knowledge of your current status is important to us and can be important to you. Many alumni have been suggested for special awards, positions or assignments based on information in your files. Some alumni have been called upon to represent Memorial at official functions. Alumni often ask us to find lost friends.

To protect your information, Memorial enforces a strict privacy policy.

RECONNECT WITH US…

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