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New maize genome a watershed in genetics



A multi-institutional team co-led by [CSHL scientists](#) has completed a high-quality sequence of the maize (corn) genome, which was announced as the cover story of the Nov. 20 issue of [Science](#). This new genome sequence represents a major watershed in genetics because it promises to advance basic research of maize and other grains and help scientists and breeders improve maize crops, which are important sources of food, fuel and fiber. Resulting improved strains of maize may, for example, produce larger yields, show resistance to disease, reduce the need for costly, polluting fertilizers, and tolerate changes in rainfall or temperature accompanying climate change. The CSHL co-project leaders are Doreen Ware, Ph.D., Professor W. Richard McCombie, Ph.D., and Professor Robert Martienssen, Ph.D.

\$3 million raised at awards gala

The fourth [Double Helix Medals](#) dinner raised \$3 million to strengthen and expand CSHL's cutting-edge research and education programs. The event honored Herbert W. Boyer, Stanley N. Cohen, Kathryn W. Davis and Maurice Greenberg -- four extraordinary people who have positively impacted human health by conducting ground-breaking research or raising awareness and funds for biomedical research. "Driven by passion, intellect and vision, each of the 2009 Double Helix Medal recipients has boldly participated in the fight to find cures for the diseases that plague us," said CSHL President Bruce Stillman.



World renowned violinist, Joshua Bell, and pianist, Frederic Chiu performed.

Be a champion this holiday season

Enjoy your holiday shopping and support CSHL! Twenty-five percent of your pre-tax purchases will be donated to the Lab when you shop at the Americana Manhasset and Wheatley Plaza during the "Champions for Charity" event, December 3-5. Shop more than 70 participating stores. Register for your Champion Card at championsforcharity.org or call 1-800-818-6767. Can't make it to the shops or don't live on Long Island? Personal shoppers can make your pre-selected purchases, allocate your donation to CSHL and ship your merchandise to you. Contact Danielle Merollo at the number above to learn more.



Drug candidate identified for treating SMA

A chemical cousin of the common antibiotic tetracycline might be useful in [treating spinal muscular atrophy](#) (SMA), a currently incurable disease that is the leading genetic cause of death in infants. A research collaboration including CSHL's Adrian Krainer, Ph.D., and scientists from Paratek Pharmaceuticals and Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, recently published their findings on this unique therapeutic candidate in [Science Translational Medicine](#). Further collaborative research will focus on pre-clinical drug development.

Malignant tumors can be shut down after all

Oncologists have had their hands tied because more than half of all human cancers have mutations that disable a protein called p53 that masterminds several cancer-fighting operations within cells. When cells lose p53, tumors grow aggressively and often cannot be treated. These tumors might be tough, but they're not invincible, suggests a [CSHL study](#). The chink in the tumors' armor, according to Associate Professor Alea Mills, Ph.D., is a protein called TAp63, a relative of p53 that's usually intact and not mutated in most cancers. Mills and her team have succeeded in shutting off the growth of tumors in which p53 is missing by turning up the production of TAp63 proteins. Their results are reported in [Nature Cell Biology](#).



Upcoming events

January 15: The Christina Renna Foundation presents An Angel's Wish Gala, with proceeds to support cancer research at CSHL. The event will take place at the Chateau LaMer, South Wellwood Avenue, Lindenhurst. Dr. Linda Van Aelst, a cancer researcher at CSHL, whose work focuses on neuroblastoma, a cancer that affects thousands of children every year, will be in attendance. For more information or to purchase tickets to the event, please call 631-225-2074, or visit www.CRF4acure.org

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) is a private, non-profit research and education institution at the forefront of research in cancer and molecular biology, neuroscience, plant genetics, and bioinformatics and genomics. Under the leadership of Dr. Bruce Stillman, a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the Royal Society (London), more than 400 scientists conduct groundbreaking research to advance the understanding and ability to diagnose and treat cancers, neurological diseases, and other causes of human suffering.

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory is one of sixty-three institutions supported by the Cancer Centers Program of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and has been designated as an NCI Cancer Center since 1987.

We would like to hear from you!
Contact us at pubaff@cshl.edu