

... In the News

Inside Higher Ed
[NIH to Study State of Biomedical Research Work Force](#)
April 28, 2011

GenomeWeb
[Pacific Biosciences launches new sequencing platform](#)
April 27, 2011

GenomeWeb
[CSHL Team Demonstrates New Application for Transgenic RNAi Approach in Mice](#)
April 21, 2011

News12
[National Grid Foundation supports genetics education on Long Island](#)
April 15, 2011

libn.com
[Cuomo OKs Broad Hollow Park Expansion](#)
April 14, 2011

... Upcoming Events

DNA Learning Center
Summer Camps
[Register here!](#)

DNA Learning Center
Urban Barcode Project
[Dates and Deadlines](#)

5/6/11
[Concert: Hiroko Sasaki](#)

5/20/11
[Concert: Xun Wang](#)

6/4/11
Don Monti Memorial
Research Foundation
[5k Faith, Hope & Love Walk](#)

6/7/11
Cold Spring Harbor
Laboratory's
[18th Annual Golf Tournament](#)

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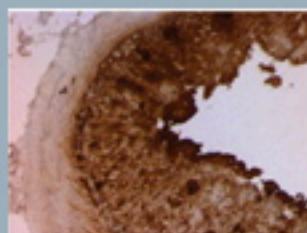
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Founded in 1890, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) has shaped contemporary biomedical research and education with programs in cancer, neuroscience, plant biology and quantitative biology. CSHL is ranked number one in the world by Thomson Reuters for impact of its research in molecular biology and genetics. The Laboratory has been home to eight Nobel Prize winners. Today, CSHL's multidisciplinary scientific community is more than 400 scientists strong and its Meetings & Courses program hosts more than 8,000 scientists from around the world each year. Tens of thousands more benefit from the research, reviews, and ideas published in journals and books distributed internationally by CSHL Press. The Laboratory's education arm also includes a graduate school and programs for undergraduates as well as middle and high school students and teachers. CSHL is a private, not-for-profit institution on the north shore of Long Island.

Perfected: method of switching essential genes on and off

A team led by Professor and HHMI investigator Dr. **Scott Lowe**, and Professor and CSHL President Dr. **Bruce Stillman**, has **perfected an approach** based on RNA interference (RNAi) technology to temporarily turn off any essential gene in adult mice and then turn it back on before the change kills the animals. The new method was published in the **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** on April 12.



Shutting down the gene RPA3 caused intestinal atrophy in mice

This work represents a major advance in scientists' ability to reversibly and non-lethally knock down gene activity in a fast and efficient way. The CSHL researchers are planning to employ their method in cancer and other disease-related research. For example, they plan to hunt for new cancer therapeutic targets by first allowing tumors to grow in mice and then using the new method to shut down candidate genes to test whether this intervention saves the animals.

A step up for two CSHL scientists

Congratulations to [Dr. Alea A. Mills](#) and [Dr. Hiro Furukawa](#) on their recent promotions to Professor and Associate Professor, respectively. Dr. Mills, who started as an associate professor at CSHL in 2001, has since made great strides in understanding how perturbations in certain genetic pathways and mechanisms lead to aging and cancer. Dr. Furukawa, who joined CSHL in 2006, is using the tools of structural biology to understand the basis of neurodegenerative diseases. His latest paper, published in [Nature Communications](#) on April 26, described the [molecular architecture](#) of a key subunit of the NMDA receptor, a potential drug target for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, depression and other disorders.

Unique strategy hunts down rare disease-causing gene

Thanks to a [unique combination](#) of next-generation DNA sequencing, conventional gene mapping and bioinformatics detective work by CSHL investigators and their Israeli collaborators, a Palestinian family learned the identity of the genetic glitch that causes a devastating, hereditary neurological disorder in some of its members. The team, which was led by Whitehead Institute Fellow and Watson School alum [Dr. Yaniv Erlich](#), included Dr. Greg Hannon--Erlich's CSHL mentor--and [Dr. Emily Hodges](#), a research investigator in the Hannon lab. Their work appeared in [Genome Research](#) on April 12.



Greg Hannon wins major mentorship award



Congratulations to Professor and HHMI Investigator Dr. [Greg Hannon](#) for winning the 2011 Northeast Association of Graduate Schools' [Geoffrey Marshall Mentoring Award](#). Dr.

Hannon was honored with the award for his outstanding support of graduate students, from course completion and thesis research all the way through to career placement. Of the 17 graduate students that he has mentored since 1999, 10 have gone on to prestigious postdoctoral positions, with four already holding independent faculty positions.

CSHL hosts forum on research and policy issues of Alzheimer's Disease

On April 20, CSHL [hosted a forum](#) on Alzheimer's disease whose purpose was to seek solutions on how to leverage research, accelerate the development of treatments and broaden access to innovative care in order to improve the quality of life for millions of Americans. Kicked off by Congressman Steve Israel, whose talk provided a federal perspective, the forum's other speakers included CSHL Associate Professor [Dr. Adam Kepecs](#), New York State Senator Carl Marcellino, and senior executives from the LI Alzheimer's Association, NY Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, and Pfizer, Inc.