

# RNA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Fall 2023 | September 15, 2023

## RNA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER: FALL 2023

We are delighted to share the many exciting activities of our vibrant community in the new issue of our RNA Society Newsletter!

In this issue, we hear from our President about the newly established RNA Society Education Committee, highlight the many fantastic RNA Society Awards to apply to (or nominate others for), provide a recap of our amazing RNA 2023 Annual Meeting in beautiful Singapore, feature our top-notch RNA Society Journal, RNA, describe our wonderful RNA Salon Program, and promote the work of our awesome RNA Jr Scientist Group.

Gabriele Fuchs and Katarína Juríková, Newsletter Editors

Daniel Kim, Media & Communications Committee Chair



## UPCOMING

### RNA SOCIETY AWARDS

Nominations are accepted August 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>

*All along your career path, the* **RNA SOCIETY** *has an award for you!*

[RNASociety.org/Awards](https://RNASociety.org/Awards)



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# FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Sandra Wolin

It was great to see so many of you in Singapore! In this Newsletter, you can read about our incredibly successful 2023 annual meeting, how to apply for one (or more) of the RNA Society awards that will be presented in 2024, new developments with our *RNA Journal*, our ongoing RNA Salon program and the many activities undertaken by our RNA Junior Scientist Group. On behalf of the Society, I want to sincerely thank the many volunteers who make these and other activities possible, as well as all members who support our Society through their participation and who contribute in myriad other ways to our success.

As we head into the fall, I want to tell you about a brand-new Society initiative. Although supporting education has been one of the aims of the Society since its founding, there has never been a program or Committee devoted to education. I am delighted to report that the Board of Directors has approved formation of a new RNA Society Education Committee. In establishing this new Committee, we are defining education broadly to include undergraduate education, graduate education, postdoctoral training, mentoring at all levels, as well as education and outreach to the general public. The Education Committee will be charged with identifying ways to support our members that are interested or engaged in education-related careers, as well as implementing programs that enhance the education and career development of RNA biologists at all levels. We also envision that the Education Committee will work collaboratively with existing RNA Society Committees and programs to implement education-related initiatives. This could include working with the DEI Committee to support the

mentoring and training of under-represented scientists, with the Media & Communications Committee to provide



education-related content to the public, with our mentoring program to augment mentoring for education-related careers and with the RNA Junior Scientist Group. A call has gone out to all members, asking those who are interested in serving as either Chairperson or a member of the Committee to send an application to [RNA@RNASociety.org](mailto:RNA@RNASociety.org). We seek involvement from members from multiple types of educational institutions and with diverse backgrounds and experiences. If you are interested, please send a brief cover letter summarizing any relevant experience or ideas and a current CV to [RNA@RNASociety.org](mailto:RNA@RNASociety.org) by September 30th, 2023.

Lastly, I want to encourage all of you to consider applying for one of our many RNA Society awards. We have awards for graduate student and postdoctoral trainees, for career researchers, for early and midcareer PIs, for distinguished mentoring and for inclusive leadership. This year we also have a new award, sponsored by Moderna, recognizing innovation in biomedical research in RNA. So please consider nominating a colleague and/or applying yourself.

# FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Sandra Wolin

To quote the great Canadian hockey player Wayne Gretzky, “you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” Nominations will be accepted until September 30th and information can be found at <https://www.rnasociety.org/awards>.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with your ideas for making the RNA Society more inclusive and beneficial to its members.

I look forward to seeing many of you at RNA 2024 in Edinburgh.

Sandy  
President of the RNA Society  
[sandra.wolin@nih.gov](mailto:sandra.wolin@nih.gov)

# AWARDS

## Ambro van Hoof

*All along your career path the RNA Society has an award for you!*

*Application deadline Sept 30th – Apply today!*

I am excited to remind you that the RNA Society has a number of awards that recognize diverse contributions to our field. Some of the awards recognize contributions by our principal investigators, while others are for trainees or researchers in permanent positions. RNA Society members at almost any stage in their career are eligible for at least one of the twelve awards. For faculty, the Elisa Izaurralde Award, the Early and Mid-Career Research Awards and the RNA Society/Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press Distinguished Research Mentor Award are joined this year by a brand new award: The RNA Society Moderna Award for Biomedical Innovation in RNA. For graduate student and post-doctoral trainees, we have two awards sponsored by Eclipsebio, two from the Scaringe Foundation, and a CSHLP Award. Other RNA Society members are eligible for the Outstanding Career Researcher award, while everybody is eligible for the Inclusive Leadership award. I would like to thank

Moderna,  
Eclipsebio,  
Cold Spring  
Harbor  
Laboratory  
Press, the  
Scaringe  
Foundation,  
and an  
anonymous  
donor for



supporting some of our awards. Each of these awards includes a number of benefits including free attendance at the 2024 RNA Society meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland for all awards, and an additional cash award for some. You can find more information on each of them on our Society web page (<https://www.rnasociety.org/awards>) or if you have any question, email me at [awards@rnasociety.org](mailto:awards@rnasociety.org). You can apply or nominate another RNA Society member today.

Ambro van Hoof  
Chair of the Awards Committee  
[awards@rnasociety.org](mailto:awards@rnasociety.org)

## RNA SOCIETY AWARDS

**Nominations open  
August 1st – September 30th**



**deadline approaching for the RNA award nominations, deadline**

The RNA Society Awards recognize outstanding contributions to the field of RNA research and education, and support the Society's members.

**[RNASociety.org/Awards](https://www.rnasociety.org/Awards)**

# NOTES ON RNA 2023

## 28<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RNA SOCIETY

The 2023 RNA Society meeting in Singapore was attended by 1000 participants gathered at the Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre. The first day included three Keynote speakers followed by a reception at the emblematic Gardens by the Bay. Ramesh Pillai (University of Geneva) showed how cap-specific methylases and decapping enzymes for alternative caps prevent activation of the innate immune pathway. Britt Glaunsinger (UC Berkeley) talked about the cellular response to herpesvirus infection, including pervasive RNA polymerase III-mediated transcription of SINE B elements as well as SINE-directed mRNA isoform switching. Yigong Shi (Westlake University) summarized the astonishing advances on CryoEM of the major and the minor spliceosomes. The following days featured 114 talks and more than 500 posters that illustrated the diversity of topics in the RNA field, from classical subjects such as RNA structure and folding or splicing and translation regulation, to emerging technologies and therapeutics. Perhaps fueled by the success of RNA-based therapies during the pandemics, there was a strong presence of industry at the meeting, which the RNA Jr Scientist Group employed to hold a career event. In addition, the meeting included very useful DEI panel, Meet the RNA Editors presentation and Mentor-Mentee lunch session, and the eagerly awaited Awards Ceremony



closed the meeting.

Besides 50 poster prizes (sponsored by Moderna), there were 13 award winners in different categories, of which we would like to mention the Lifetime Achievement in Science Award to Marlene Belfort for her discovery of self-catalytic introns in phage and bacteria, and the Lifetime Achievement in Service Award to



Benoît Chabot for his extended support in chairing the Meetings Committee and the establishment of allowance programs. All in all, vibrant science in a wonderful location which all of you, members of the RNA Society, turned into an unforgettable experience. We would like to thank you for that, and especially thank our colleagues on the organizing team, David Bartel, Douglas Black, Thomas Preiss and Yue Wan, our 13 Asian RNA Research Ambassadors, our numerous sponsors, the Simple Meetings team, and our CEO, Kristian Baker, for making this experience possible. See you all next year in Edinburgh!

Ling-Ling Chen and Fátima Gebauer  
Co-lead Organizers of RNA 2023

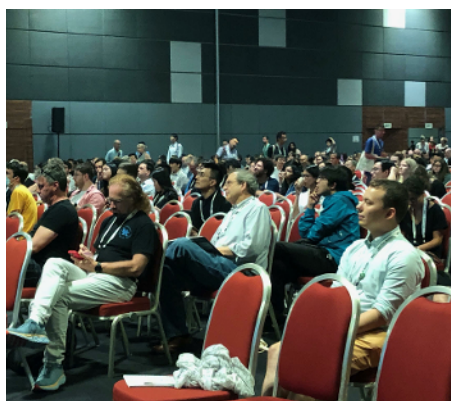
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RNA 2023

## 28<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RNA SOCIETY



# RNA JOURNAL

## Javier Caceres and Eric Phizicky

### *Developments at the Society Journal, RNA*

The RNA Society journal, *RNA* publishes curiosity-driven, high-quality research papers in all areas of RNA biology, which has been a signature of our journal through 28 years of steadfast leadership by our predecessor and colleague Tim Nilsen.

A major current goal is to further streamline our rapid publication process without sacrificing the high quality of research that we routinely publish in *RNA*. We believe that we are in a highly competitive position for this, since we have a stellar group of Associate Editors (<https://rnajournal.cshlp.org/site/misc/edboard.xhtml>), comprised of 19 prominent researchers who collectively cover all areas of RNA biology and who can call on their wide network of scientific colleagues for expert opinions on manuscripts. These *RNA* Editors will continue to directly manage all submitted papers and will aim to accelerate our currently rapid review process.

Importantly, all articles published in *RNA* benefit from broad promotion of each article on the journal's Social Media platforms. In addition, we have recently implemented a the 'Meet the First Author' feature, which has proven to be a popular mechanism for authors to introduce themselves to the *RNA* community. We will also continue to award the annual *RNA* Journal Prize to two particularly meritorious articles published in *RNA*.

Finally, we will publish annual Special Issues on topics of high relevance for the *RNA* and related communities, following the success of the first two Special Issues, *RNA* in Biological Condensates, edited by Tom Cech, and *RNA* Therapeutics, edited by Adrian Krainer and Michelle Hastings.

These special issues are available at the *RNA* Journal website, <https://rnajournal.cshlp.org/content/28/1/1.full> and <https://rnajournal.cshlp.org/content/29/4/393.full>.

We look forward to working with you to publish your exciting *RNA* science. We will accept manuscripts in any of our six categories as Articles, Reports, Bioinformatics, Hypotheses, Methods, or Letters to the Editor, and will also continue to publish timely Reviews, Perspectives, Commentaries, and Mini-reviews.

Javier F. Caceres and Eric M. Phizicky

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# RNA SALONS

## Ute Kothe

### *The worldwide RNA Salon Family*

We love RNA, and we love being scientists. And thus, as RNA researchers we often pack our bags and move leaving family and friends behind, immigrating into a new country, learning a new language, integrating into new cultures – just so that we can discover even more about RNA and work along the most inspiring RNA researchers in the world.

Luckily, we can find homes away from home, and since 2016, the RNA Salon program has accomplished just this. In 2016, the RNA Society invited applications for the RNA Salon program, and the first 29 RNA Salons received funding to engage the local and regional RNA researchers in regular events. Fast forward to 2022-2023, and there are now a record number of 56 RNA Salons with many thousand participants on all continents. Indeed, there are now RNA Salons in Africa, Australia, Asia, South and North America and Europe (will we form an RNA Salon in Antarctica next?).

Thanks to the tireless efforts of hundreds of RNA Salon organizers, you can now move to a new city and find a community of friends quickly by joining an RNA Salon. You will enjoy inspiring RNA research presentations, and you will network with like-minded scientists. Nowadays, many RNA Salons organize in-person events allowing us to mix and mingle in combination with virtual meetings where we can connect with the best RNA researchers around the world. This sense of community reaches far beyond individual labs and institutions and has become the true spirit of the RNA Society.

And if you happen to move to a region without RNA

Salons, you can easily create a new RNA Salon and become an inspiring leader for others! Just check out the RNA Society websites,



emails, and social media for the next call for applications – there will be one very soon. It is wonderful to see that many new RNA Salons are the “off-springs” of other RNA Salons and to witness the sharing of ideas among the RNA Salon organizers how to best support their regional communities. Indeed, it is now a true badge of honor to be an RNA Salon organizer and to be part of this leadership group that forms the spine of the RNA Society. I am incredibly grateful for the visionary and tireless work of the RNA Salon organizers who give so much to all our communities!

Lastly, I want to thank many people who have supported the RNA Salon Program over the last years. First, I am incredibly grateful for Kristian Baker’s trust and collaboration: she recruited me as RNA Salon Program Coordinator and had conceived the idea for the RNA Salon program. It is so much fun to work with you, Kristian, and to see this program grow and succeed! The RNA Salon program has greatly benefited from the long-term support of our industry sponsor, Lexogen, and I would like to thank our liaisons, Lukas



# RNA SALONS

## Ute Kothe

Paul and Amra Dedic. I also owe special thanks to Olivia Rissland and Kristin Koutmou as Membership Committee chairs, Evelyn Jabri and Wen Ding as Chief Financial Officers, as well as the social media team and the newsletter team of the RNA Society. In addition, I thank Chad Phillips for web support and Karen Wrublik for helping to set up trainee RNA Society memberships. And of course, I appreciate all the support by the past and present RNA Society Presidents and Directors who believe in the power of the RNA Salon program.

Ute Kothe

RNA Salon Program Coordinator

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# RNA JUNIOR SCIENTIST GROUP CORNER

Daniel Oh, Jimin Yoon, Gjendine Voss, and Doreen Lugano Rogalska

The RNA Society is composed of scientists from various career stages, highlighting the need for career building and networking events geared specifically towards these different members. The RNA Jr Scientist Group was formed to help organize events for early career RNA scientists, with a focus towards graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

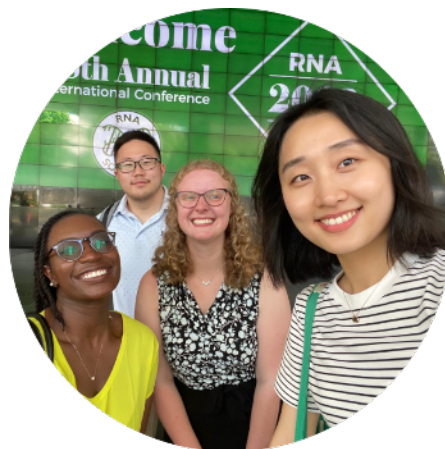
The mission of the RNA Jr Scientist Group is to promote networking and career building opportunities among graduate students, postdocs and early-career scientists belonging to the RNA Society. We are an international group of four junior scientists that work with our faculty advisors to plan events at the RNA Society Annual Meeting, as well as other virtual events throughout the year. We aim to provide awareness of resources and opportunities for collaboration within this network of scientists. We highlight breakthroughs in the RNA field, relevant workshops, awards, funding opportunities, events, and meetings to foster meaningful interactions among RNA Society junior scientists in addition to those that occur at our annual meetings.

This past year at RNA 2023, we organized a pre-meeting activity, a networking evening, and an

industry career panel discussion.

The pre-meeting activity consisted of small group visits to the Singapore ArtScience

Museum to foster networking before the conference officially began. The networking event took place during the evening of the second night of the conference. We had hundreds of scientists attend throughout the duration of the event, and even after the event we would recognize one another throughout the conference with different color RNA Society pins that we had used for an icebreaker activity. The career event this year was a panel composed of five scientists in industry careers titled “Navigating a Career in Industry: Advice from Biotech and Big Pharma Professionals”. The panel was composed of those in various industry positions and stages, at both small and larger biotech companies. The panelists were



# RNA JUNIOR SCIENTIST GROUP CORNER

Daniel Oh, Jimin Yoon, Gjendine Voss, and Doreen Lugano Rogalska

Jonas Tholen (postdoctoral scientist at Genentech, USA); Libby Snell (principal scientist at Nanopore, UK); Haining Lin (director of Bioinformatics at Moderna, USA); Shunichi Kashida (Founder and CEO of xFOREST Therapeutics, Japan); and G. Brett Robb (Scientific Director at New England Biolabs, USA). We loved the stimulating discussion, and hearing all the questions from our audience!

We look forward to another successful year of engaging events for the RNA Jr Scientist Group and thank the RNA Society for helping us achieve these goals. It has been fun meeting so many of you at RNA 2023 – now we hope to meet both old and new faces at RNA 2024. Please find us on X (formerly Twitter) [@JrRNAscientists](#) and feel free to reach out to us if you ever have any questions or suggestions ([junior\\_scientists@rnasociety.org](mailto:junior_scientists@rnasociety.org)).

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OPEN

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