

Travel summary July 2004 Celeste MacElrevey

With generous support from the Graduate Women in Science Society I attended the 2004 RNA Society meeting in Madison Wisconsin. Lasting for six days, this remains the largest meeting I have participated in. A broadening experience, I appreciated not only the depth, but the breadth of the RNA community I was immersed in.

I presented a poster at this meeting titled, "Crystallographic analysis of the Trp/Amber editing site of the hepatitis delta virus: Discerning the rules of ADAR engagement." It was during this event that I met my Swiss competitor, an NMR spectroscopist, FH Allain, and began to appreciate the paradox of guarded openness that today's researchers must struggle through. I also had the occasion to meet several other figures in the RNA editing field, including Mary O'Connell from Scotland. It is an empowering experience to describe RNA editing to a curious student while a "master" quietly nods her assent in the background.

As a green graduate student, I was rather intimidated by the caliber of colleagues I found myself surrounded by. This was nicely balanced by the many familiar faces hailing from home. I enjoyed quality time with collaborators and lab mates from Rochester that I would never have experienced had I stayed home. Attending talks at the side of my PI was also a learning experience of inestimable value.

This meeting was a shaping experience in my graduate career. With additional meetings I have found that while the intimidation fades the value does not. It is my hope that every student in the Biochemistry program travel far from home, both in geography and subject. This is how connections develop, how discovery begins.