

The Eicosanoid Research Division @ IBGM

-- News Archive --

2009

December 23, 2009 - Gema Pérez-Chacón just finished her tenure at the ERD. While we are sad to see Gema go, we thank her for the hard and dedicated work, and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

December 22, 2009 - There is no bad fifth (or so they say). Just one week ago, David Balgoma successfully defended his PhD dissertation, and the committee unanimously awarded him distinction. David will remain a member of the ERD for quite some time yet.

November 28, 2009 - Not succumbing to the temptations of joint ventures used to be difficult in the past. Not anymore. Roger Glover, bassist and songwriter extraordinaire, had it written some time ago: *going nowhere sitting in a dream...*

November 13, 2009 - A very instructive [review](#) on the advantages --and shortcomings-- of the lipidomics approach has recently been published in Nature Chemical Biology. Highly recommended reading (unsure, however, that the number of arachidonate-containing glycerophospholipids in macrophages exceeds 100!).

October 30, 2009 - Back from the Annual CIBERDEM meeting. Friendly people, nice place, excellent premises, and superb organization. What else could we ask for? Clara and David gave very good talks too. 2008 Annual Report (our part) [here](#).

October 25, 2009 - A piece of musical advice from the ERD staff to a few of those who lurk around here from time to time: Metallica's *Nothing Else Matters*. Interesting [lyrics](#), particularly those of the refrain.

October 22, 2009 - Yesterday José Pindado became our fourth student to earn a doctoral degree from the University of Valladolid (... for life can be wonderful!).

October 2, 2009 - "**When your work is an extension of who you really are deep down inside, it is no longer a job or a career. It is a calling**" (Lance Armstrong, 7-time Tour de France winner). Fall 2009 group meeting schedule [here](#).

September 29, 2009 - [Pic](#) of Clara Meana talking about macrophages and phospholipases in Oviedo during the annual meeting of the Spanish Biochemical Society. Time for fun and [old memories](#).

September 1, 2009 - Our latest paper in JI was featured on [MDLinx.com](#), a site which in the words of its editorial team is "the world's most up to date index of articles that matter in the daily lives of physicians and other healthcare professionals". A little free exposure is always welcome.

August 11, 2009 - The idea that Mg²⁺-dependent phosphatidate phosphohydrolase 1 (a.k.a. lipin 1) possesses signaling functions is gaining ground in the field. An interesting [review](#) article has just been published on the topic.

July 27, 2009 - Our lipidomics platform will not become a facility of the Institute we work in. Present conditions are not the appropriate. As for us, nothing changes.

June 25, 2009 - Great news to end the academic year. Our application for the acquisition of a Q-TOF mass spectrometer has been resolved favorably. Our new toy will nicely complement the ion-trap machine currently in service and the soon-to-come triple-quadrupole and GC/MS instruments. Now we can finally say that the ERD's Lipidomics Platform is a reality.

June 12, 2009 - "**Science is a wonderful thing if one does not have to earn one's living at it**" (Albert Einstein). Summer 2009 group meeting schedule [here](#).

May 29, 2009 - [Here](#) is the official website for the Third European Workshop on Lipid Mediators. So far, things are progressing very well, and this promises to be quite an exciting meeting.

May 26, 2009 - Update on former grad students. Javier Casas joined the Scripps Research Institute and Violeta Ruipérez will soon join Cambridge University. Nice.

May 18, 2009 - More on journal impact factors. Some excellent points are made in a recent article in PNAS (106: 6883-6884, 2009). This is another of those pieces that would have to be translated into Spanish and distributed among the chaps that populate grant evaluation panels and promotion committees in this country.

April 3, 2009 - "*Prosss-taglandins, the ei-co-sa-noids creating pain are the ones to blame - when you get inflamed and ouch! - they hurt inside your brain*". So commences the [Prostaglandin song](#), lyrics by Kevin Ahern to the tune of *Oklahoma*. More of Kevin Ahern's wildly popular metabolic melodies [here](#).

March 25, 2009 - "*Toll signaling: next stop, arachidonic acid*". Our latest paper in JI was selected for inclusion in the journal's [ImmunoCast](#) of March 15. As indicated in the journal website, a small number of papers regarded by reviewers and editors as the top 10% in their field are highlighted in the ImmunoCast section. Sounds good (no pun intended).

March 24, 2009 - We read in the March issue of the the Spanish Biochemical Society bulletin that "for some [Spanish scientists], research excellence means just their own research and that from their buddies" (p. 28). Some? Quite an understatement, indeed.

March 23, 2009 - "**One swallow a spring -or summer- does not make**" (Ancient Greek proverb). Spring 2009 group meeting schedule [here](#).

March 18, 2009 - The [Third European Workshop on Lipid Mediators](#), a most exciting transpyrenaic enterprise, is just walking its first steps. More info coming soon.

February 27, 2009 - It is with great sadness that we have learned of the decease of Moti Liscovitch from the February issue of *ASBMB Today*. In the early 90's we were doing things on phospholipase D regulation, and at that time Moti was easily the most imaginative researcher in the field. We met him at several scientific meetings over the years. As we moved away from the phospholipase D field contact was lost, but we always kept fond memories of that extremely nice guy from Israel.

February 2, 2009 - That ingesting food rich in ω -3 polyunsaturated fatty acids is very good for humans no one would dispute. What it is still unclear however, is whether ingesting extra amounts of ω -6 polyunsaturated fatty acids is harmless, harmful, or helpful. An interesting article on this topic that has spawned an even more interesting correspondence was published last year by [Weaver et al.](#) in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association (issues of July, October, and November).

January 30, 2009 - On St. Bridget's day of 1593, King Henry IV of France declared that "Paris is well worth a mass". For the moment being, that is pretty much okay for us.

January 23, 2009 - In the December issue of the bulletin of the Spanish Biochemical Society there is an [article](#) by Sonia Armengou (IRB Barcelona) where advice in the form of "Ten Commandments" is provided to all those women who want to succeed in science (shortened English translation [here](#)). While some of the points are obvious, overall this is quite entertaining reading and worth keeping it in mind. On a last note, not clear why this decalogue was intended solely for women; it suits men just as well.

January 22, 2009 - An evaluation of the scientific performance of our Institute and the research groups that are part of it was recently conducted by a panel of foreign experts summoned by the Spanish National Research Council. While the overall evaluation of the Institute was not positive, the Eicosanoid Research Division did receive favorable reviews. The only concern was that the research being conducted is at the risk of leaning too much on the conservative side of things. Interestingly, this is something that we ourselves had already acknowledged in the [strategic plan](#) that was submitted for the evaluation.

January 20, 2009 - Just for the sake of nostalgia, this is how the front page of v.4.3. looked like, with the [old](#) and the [current](#) banner.

January 15, 2009 - Heavy housekeeping in our site for the past few days. Practically all pages have been modified and/or updated. Front page has been changed to now show a nice macrophage cell loaded with lipid droplets. Not without regret, the Schemes and Protocols sections have been eliminated. This is site version 4.4.

January 9, 2009 - The article we have designated as **Paper of the Year 2008** was published in the Sep 19 issue of Cell (vol. 134, pp. 933-944), In that paper, Hotamisligil and co-workers identified palmitoleic acid as an adipose tissue-derived lipid hormone that stimulates muscle insulin action and suppresses hepatosteatosis.

January 5, 2009 - **"Hey Three Wise Men! Pass us that bottle, will ya?"** (Ian Anderson, wise Englishman). Winter 2009 group meeting schedule [here](#).

2008

December 31, 2008 - Good news to end the year, coming to us in a very peculiar manner. See it [here](#) (that one was too brilliant to pass up).

December 17, 2008 - The Eicosanoid Research Division group picture of the year 2008 can be found [here](#).

December 11, 2008 - Yesterday, Violeta Ruipérez defended her PhD dissertation, graduating with honors from the University of Valladolid.

November 11, 2008 - Cryptic message: to think that you got something to report or not to think that you got something to report...

October 20, 2008 - The lipidomics field is definitely on the rise worldwide. LIPID MAPS, the American consortium on lipidomics led by Ed Dennis, has been awarded a \$38 million renewal grant to continue research for five more years. This is great news for us for so many reasons. SDUT article [here](#).

October 13, 2008 - Great lipidomic times for our division. Our first mass spec paper was just accepted for publication and, in addition, we have received confirmation that our application for the acquisition of a triple-quadrupole apparatus has been approved.

September 21, 2008 - "**The ideal of beauty for a he-toad is a she-toad**" (Spanish proverb). Fall 2008 group meeting schedule [here](#).

September 2, 2008 - Young guns for the Eicosanoid Research Division. Graduate students Lucía Peña y Luis Gil de Gómez join our labs today.

July 11, 2008 - Pics of the Second International Workshop on Lipid Mediators [here](#). One month delay, not too bad.

July 7, 2008 - Our little experiment with city trackers has come to an end after one year (see May 28, 2007 entry). Visitors from all over the globe, with the notable exception of Japan (sob). The cities we received more visits from were, quite expectedly, Madrid, Valladolid and Barcelona, in this order. What was not that expected, however, was to receive so many visits from places such as Omaha, Nebraska, Sunnyvale and Emeryville, California, and several Irish cities. Exotic places from which we received visits include Bangkok, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Burkina Faso.

July 1, 2008 - "**If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen**" (US President Harry S. Truman). Summer 2008 group meeting schedule [here](#).

June 23, 2008 - Today, Javier Casas brilliantly defended his PhD dissertation. Javi is our second student to graduate from the University of Valladolid. He will remain with us until December, when he moves to San Diego to receive postdoctoral training. In the meantime, there is still much confocal microscopy to do!

June 16, 2008 - The Second International Workshop on Lipid Mediators was held Jun 12 and 13 here in Valladolid. It was much fun indeed. We will be posting pics of the meeting as soon as they come. The final program can be retrieved [here](#).

June 4, 2008 - "Fed of being fed I got tired of asking the world why, why". That is from a Joan Manuel Serrat song, and reflects quite nicely the way we feel every time we are summoned to those national panels for the evaluation of grants, fellowships, etc., and are confronted with the argument that JBC is a lesser journal just because of its low impact factor. We have decided not to dispute anymore. Instead, we will translate [this article](#) into Spanish and distribute it among the unenlightened. Maybe it works, who knows.

May 23, 2008 - So many things to do, so little time... to update this site. A bit more than a month ago, Magdalena Canali, a graduate student from the National University of Córdoba, Argentina, joined us for a short stay. She will remain with us til mid June.

April 26, 2008 - The Second International Workshop on Lipid Mediators is on its feet, up and running. Website of the workshop [here](#). First announcement [here](#).

April 16, 2008 - After the last political changes in Spain, we now depend on the newly-created Ministry of Science and Innovation. This is the third change in the denomination of our ministry in five years.

April 11, 2008 - [Here](#) is the logo of CIBERDEM, the biomedical research network we belong to. Orange color is definitely an optimal choice and font looks somewhat familiar. In other words, two thumbs up to the designer. CIBERDEM website [here](#) (in Spanish)

April 8, 2008 - *Latrant et scitis estatint praetesquitantes estis*. That is Latin, and summarizes quite well some recent happenings.

March 19, 2008 - "**Science and religion are sisters: the one seeks knowledge of creation and the other of the Creator**" (attributed to Wernher von Braun). Spring 2008 group meeting schedule [here](#).

March 3, 2008 - Clara Meana, a postdoctoral associate, joins today as a new member of the Eicosanoid Research Division.

February 20, 2008 - In the Nov 30 issue of JBC, Olefsky and co-workers published a study demonstrating that free fatty acids can activate inflammatory signaling in macrophages via engagement of TLR2 and TLR4 receptors (Nguyen et al., JBC 2007: 35279-35292). This is the article we have distinguished as **Paper of the Year 2007**.

February 6, 2008 - We welcome Gema Pérez-Chacón as a new member of the Eicosanoid Research Division.

January 24, 2008 - An interesting commentary on the potential pitfalls of translating mouse studies to humans has been published in the Jan issue of Immunity (vol. 28, pp. 1-4). It is good that someone reminds us from time to time that, regardless of the many genetic similarities between mice and humans, a mouse is a mouse and a human is a human.

January 21, 2008 - Pretty amusing that exchange of correspondence between the editors of some highly-reputed journals, and Thomson Scientific representatives (the creators and maintainers of that infamous impact factor thing), about... uh, impact factors (latest installment appearing in J. Exp. Med. (Jan 10, doi:10.1084/jem.20080053). Great if something comes out of this.

January 16, 2008 - Beginning this year, our division forms part of something called *Biomedical Research Center on Diabetes and Related Metabolic Disorders (CIBERDEM)*, a virtual network sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Health. This initiative supersedes the Thematic Network we were associated with for the past year.

January 15, 2008 - Tommy Shaw used to sing about people with too much time on their hands. Case in point: the Bio-Rad people singing [PCR](#) to find out who the daddy is.

January 11, 2008 - "**Flower power didn't work, so what? We start again**" (John Lennon). Winter 2008 group meeting schedule [here](#).

2007

December 26, 2007 - In the latest issue of JCI there is an essay, or a personal perspective, as they call it, on how to appropriately write a scientific manuscript (117: 3599-3602, 2007). Whether instructive reading or not, it is certainly entertaining.

November 15, 2007 - St. Albert the Great. A little pastime for a day like today: [caption this pic](#). Of women and mice?

October 11, 2007 - This is a [pic](#) of our grad student Javi Casas having fun while talking phospholipases at the annual meeting of the Spanish Biochemical Society, recently held in Málaga. That is one great meeting.

September 19, 2007 - "**The skin I'm in is alright with me. It's not old, just older**" (Jon Bon Jovi, American singer and philosopher). Fall 2007 group meeting schedule [here](#).

September 10, 2007 - We welcome Esperanza Esquinas as a new member of the Eicosanoid Research Division. Esperanza is our second Andalusian graduate student.

August 1, 2007 - Our division currently has two openings for graduate students and other two for postdocs. Pertinent info has been placed on the front page for those who may be interested. We offer a friendly and enthusiastic environment, and excellent working conditions. Do not let this opportunity pass you by!

July 5, 2007 - Good winds for the Eicosanoid Research Division. The scores for our grant applications to various agencies are coming, all of them nothing short of excellent. That means we should be getting quite significant funding for the 2008-2010 period. Hence our labs should expand accordingly.

June 19, 2007 - "**Tres conejos en un árbol tocando el tambor, que sí, que no, que sí lo he visto yo**" (Sir Paul McCartney remembering his formative years). Summer 2007 group meeting schedule [here](#).

May 28, 2007 - Another city tracker sits on the front page. Not the prettiest thing in the web world, but it seems to get the job done.

May 25, 2007 - The city tracker thing did not work out (city visits were tracked only for the most recent 24 h). Until we find another gimmick that better suits our tastes, a visit counter has been placed instead.

May 21, 2007 - More for the sake of fun than for anything else, we have placed a city tracker on the bottom of the front page. Yes, we too succumbed to the fashion... Let's see now who's watching us out there.

March 14, 2007 - As a part of his touring of Castile & León, Juanma Zapata, another old San Diego friend, came over to our institute for a one-day visit. So many good memories, so little time.

March 13, 2007 - "**It takes the same effort to work on an important problem as on a pedestrian or trivial one**" (Julius Axelrod, 1970 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine). Spring 2007 group meeting schedule [here](#).

March 2, 2007 - In the March 2 issue of the Journal of Biological Chemistry there is a paper by the Shimizu lab reporting, at long last, the cloning of lysoplatelet-activating factor:acetyl-CoA acetyl transferase, the ultimate enzyme in the pathway for platelet-activating factor biosynthesis (Shindou et al., JBC 282: 6532–6539, 2007). Interestingly, the enzyme possesses as well a very significant lysophospholipid:arachidonyl-CoA acyl transferase activity, suggesting that it may also play a role in phospholipid reacylation reactions. Who could have anticipated that.

February 19, 2007 - Heavy site maintenance over the past few days. Our URL is no longer a forwarding one. Among other things, this allows for a favicon to show in all and every page of the site. Most other things that have changed, generally more important than the favicon, run in the background.

February 16, 2007 - Today, an old friend of our latter San Diego days, Isabel Varela-Nieto, came to visit us and our institute. As Mellencamp would put it, life goes on long after the thrill of livin' is gone, oh yeah.

February 1, 2007 - A long time coming, we welcome María Alonso as a new member of the Eicosanoid Research Division. María is our first postdoc here in Valladolid.

January 19, 2007 - The eicosanoid research efforts of María Balboa have been [recognized](#) by the Diursa Prize and the Royal Academy of Medicine. Cool.

January 12, 2007 - Eicosanoid Baby #4 arrived last week! On Wed 10, Montse Duque gave birth to a baby girl, her second kid. The baby's name will be Nerea.

January 10, 2007 - No corporative pocket calendar this year. Instead, [this one](#), so as to increase the cheesiness quotient of these pages.

January 9, 2007 - "**Wisdom pursues me, but I am faster**" (Spanish proverb). Winter 2007 group meeting schedule [here](#).

January 8, 2007 - Our **Paper of the Year 2006** is a very recent one. It was published in the December issue of *BBA Molecular and Cell Biology of Lipids* by Jon Arm and colleagues (1761: 1489-1497, 2006). In this paper, genetic evidence is provided for the existence of two mice phenotypes regarding the involvement of secreted group V phospholipase A₂ in the production of cyclooxygenase-2-derived mediators. This somewhat unexpected finding may help clarify some poorly described aspects in this rapidly-moving field.

2006

December 20, 2006 - We celebrated today our highly-praised Annual Christmas Luncheon. Argentinian food (which is to say meat) was our pick this year. Pic of the event [here](#).

December 4, 2006 - More good news. We have been admitted into something called *Thematic Networks for Cooperative Investigation*, an initiative launched by the Spanish Ministry of Health to foster cooperation between groups working on similar areas of biomedical interest. What this means in layman terms is that extra money to hire personnel will be made available to us. We are included in the network "Diabetes and Related Metabolic Disorders".

November 29, 2006 - After swift negotiations, the Eicosanoid Research Division has signed an agreement with the pharmaceutical company [PharmaMar](#) to study various aspects of lipid metabolism in cells treated with anticancer drugs. This is exciting news, and a big step in the right direction for us.

October 6, 2006 - After the "International Professional of the Year 2004" (July 16, 2004) and the "Leading Health Professional of the World 2005" (October 23, 2004) award nominations, today it was the turn of the "[Man of the Year 2006](#)" award. This one is from the American Biographical Institute and, according to them, *reserved only for men who have significantly enhanced world communities and professions...*

October 5, 2006 - "**You do not know how the monkey sweats**" (African proverb). Fall 2006 Group Meeting meeting schedule [here](#).

October 2, 2006 - The [Fundación La Caixa Biomedical Forum](#) Meeting was held today in Barcelona. Violeta Ruipérez presented our latest results on cyclooxygenase-2 regulation.

September 18, 2006 - We welcome Alma Astudillo, a graduate student, as a new member of the Eicosanoid Research Division

September 9, 2006 - Palm trees galore in [Elche](#), Eastern Spain. Time for some cell signaling stuff under the auspices of the Spanish Biochemical Society.

September 5, 2006 - As the old proverb says, "*Men are masters of their silence but slaves of their words*". Some people digging into that, both ways.

July 17, 2006 - Some chaps are still bold enough to embark themselves (and their families) in a quest for new frontiers of knowledge a.k.a. sabbatical year. Quique Pérez Payá is one of them. [He and his family](#) are currently in the "almost" step of their journey: almost bought a car, almost rented an apartment, almost found a school for the kids... However, all of these adventures take place in San Francisco, and that definitely pays for everything, whether or not you wear some flowers in your hair.

July 14, 2006 - Yesterday, Rebeca Pérez successfully defended her thesis dissertation as a final fulfillment of the academic requirements for a Ph.D. degree from the University of Valladolid. Rebeca has been our first graduate student here in Valladolid, and we do truly wish her well in her future endeavors.

July 7, 2006 - Albert Camus also said that all that he knew most surely about morality and obligations, he owed to soccer. It could be that soccer is not of much interest to some in the neighborhood.

June 20, 2006 - "**Time is an awkward inconvenience between soccer matches**" (Albert Camus, French writer). We agree. Summer 2006 group meeting schedule [here](#).

June 16, 2006 - A one-day [lipid workshop](#), gathering together scientists from Spain, France, and Italy was held in Barcelona. A nice initiative that deserves continuity.

May 30, 2006 - Now that the election for rector of the University of Valladolid is definitively over, we will just add that somehow, confusing times lie ahead.

May 4, 2006 - Days of agitation and excitement for the University of Valladolid, as the run for the Rectorial Chair rages on. Since our employer is the Spanish Research Council, not the

University, this election stuff is a lesser issue for us in particular. Whether the same can be said for the Institute as a whole remains to be seen.

April 4, 2006 - In the latest issue of JBC there is a [paper](#) from George Carman's lab identifying the gene encoding a Mg²⁺-dependent phosphatidic acid phosphatase enzyme in *S. cerevisiae*. Interestingly, this gene turned out to be a homolog of the mammalian gene *LPIN1*, which encodes lipin, a protein involved in adipogenesis. This paper represents a major breakthrough for the lipid field, since of all enzymes involved in phospholipid biosynthesis in eukaryotic cells, Mg²⁺-dependent phosphatidic acid phosphatase was the only one that remained to be described at a molecular level. As the JBC highlights in an aptly-titled editorial, the lipid synthesis story is now complete.

March 28, 2006 - In the March issue of the newsletter of the Spanish Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology there is a [comment](#) on our recent paper in *Molecular Biology of the Cell*. This is the second time that one of our papers deserves the attention of the editors (see Feb 3, 2005 entry). We thank again the Society for the free exposure.

March 21, 2006 - "**Springtime has come, and no one knows how it happened**" (Spanish proverb). In the Spanish language, that rhymes. Spring 2006 group meeting schedule [here](#).

March 15, 2006 - It's always nice to meet old friends you had not seen in years. Yasu Shirai from Kobe, Japan, crossed half the globe to pay us a [visit](#) here in Valladolid. Needless to say, it was such a great time.

March 1, 2006 - Clarification: sentence in italics in the entry right below this one is evidently adapted from a verse from Paul Laurence Dunbar's [When Malindy Sings](#).

February 24, 2006 - [Never ever give up!](#) Not entirely clear whether this is referring to the frog or the stork, but what is definitely clear is that *when hit comes to raal right mass spectrometrin' in Valladolid, 't ain't no easy thing to do*.

February 20, 2006 - The good guys at [The Free Dictionary](#) utilize the following sentence to exemplify the proper usage of the expression "throw a tantrum": *When you are a grown-up, you don't throw a tantrum if something offends you, you discuss it*. Some people in the neighborhood could browse the Free Dictionary more often.

February 16, 2006 - Some more pics of our labs, [here](#) and [here](#). As these are fairly recent pics, the benches look closer to the organized chaos every good mannered lab should be in.

February 2, 2006 - The official 2006 Group Picture of the Eicosanoid Research Division can be found [here](#). No lab coats this time.

February 1, 2006 - In the Jan 2006 issue of ASBMB Today, newsletter of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, there is an [article](#) giving some practical advice to people who just begin an independent scientific career in the States. This is very instructive reading. Too bad that the Spanish system works so different.

January 25, 2006 - Some [pics](#) of our labs. The pictures were taken shortly after our move to the new building (July 2005), that is why the benches look so empty. The bosses are [here](#).

January 17, 2006 - Group meetings resume after Christmas break. Winter 2006 schedule posted [here](#) for quick reference.

January 9, 2006 - It is customary in these lands for institutions, businesses, etc. to distribute small wallet calendars at the beginning of each year. [Here](#) is ours (Spanish Research Council at Castile-León) for 2006.

January 5, 2006 - It was no easy task to decide on which paper to pick as **Paper of the Year 2005**. In the end, our decision was to select the paper that Takao Shimizu and co-workers published in the July 1 issue of JBC (Ohto et al., JBC 280: 24576-24583, 2005). In this paper, three new murine phospholipase A₂ enzymes with homology to group IV members were described. With these, the total number of genes encoding functional phospholipase A₂ proteins in mammals reaches the whopping number of [22](#). One only wonders how many more PLA₂s still remain to be discovered.

2005

December 26, 2005 - In the fourth centennial of Don Quixote, we send you [Christmas greetings](#) from the foot of the windmills.

December 23, 2005 - Christmas time is here again, and with it, our famous [Annual Christmas Luncheon](#). This year it was Brazilian food. Tasty.

November 29, 2005 - The Eicosanoid Research Division website moves today to a new webhost. Our previous host, Retecal, will shortly go out of business. It is fair to acknowledge that Retecal provided an outstanding service for the two and a half years we were with them.

November 15, 2005 - Like St. Albert, saint of the day, today's news is great. Olimpio Montero has been promoted to the scientific scale of the Spanish Research Council, and thus becomes the fourth faculty member of the Eicosanoid Research Division.

November 11, 2005 - A new banner presides over the site. This banner, more in the spirit of older ones, uses a sea dawn image for the background (thanx for the pic, Bill). The previous banner featured the Madrid night sky, and can be found [here](#).

November 10, 2005 - The research support history of our division, past and present, has been added to the site. This info is accessible from a link on the bottom of the Research page.

November 2, 2005 - Today, Martín Valdearcos joins the Eicosanoid Research Division. Martín is our first non-Castilian grad student, as he hails from Andalusia.

October 19, 2005 - A mini-symposium titled "Atherogenesis and Metabolic Disorders. From Genetic Alterations to Pathogenic Mechanisms" was organized here in Valladolid by our colleague Mariano Sánchez Crespo, as a part of the XXIV Meeting of the Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology. Since there is always a first time, or so they say, Jesús Balsinde spoke about Lipidomics.

October 4, 2005 - We've got Eicosanoid Baby #3! Yesterday, Yolanda gave birth to a baby boy, her second child. The baby's name will be Héctor.

October 3, 2005 - The local newspaper *El Día de Valladolid* published an [interview](#) with Jesús Balsinde about Alzheimer's Disease and prostaglandins (in Spanish).

September 24, 2005 - The [46th ICBL Meeting](#) was held in Corsica, France. Great conference, great venue, and also a great opportunity to meet [old friends](#) we had not seen in a long time.

September 1, 2005 - We welcome David Balgoma, a graduate student, as a new member of the Eicosanoid Research Division.

August 17, 2005 - We just received communication that two private foundations, [Fundación Mario Losantos del Campo](#) and [Fundación La Caixa](#), have resolved to fund our lipidomics research for the next three years. As Col. Hannibal Smith so eloquently put it, we love it when a plan comes together.

July 19, 2005 - Move of the Eicosanoid Research Division to the new IBGM building was completed today. People say they love the new facilities.

June 22, 2005 - The new IBGM building was [inaugurated](#) yesterday by the Minister of Education and Science. Many big fishes of the scientific and local scene, including the President of the Spanish Research Council and the Rector Magnificus of the University of Valladolid, attended the event. Everything was so pretty, but the building is to remain unoccupied for at least one more month. Getting on to the important stuff, food was scarce.

May 27, 2005 - It took time, but we all finally got together for the *complete* 2005 Eicosanoid Research Division Group Picture. Take a look at it [here](#).

May 24, 2005 - Just another facelift for the site, version 4.3. The front page has been re-designed again, and different kinds of images have been added in every section. Following up on the Jan 18 entry, one could well say that we finally found a bright spot for Pablo de Valladolid, a.k.a. "the most astonishing piece of painting ever done" (Edouard Manet dixit), in the [Introduction](#) page.

May 6, 2005 - Coda to yesterday's entry: despair not, ye olde folks, for our Division counts with the talent of two people --María Balboa and Violeta Ruipérez-- who received their degrees from Spain's #1 University!

May 5, 2005 - The El Mundo newspaper made public its [annual appraisal](#) of the best Universities in Spain. Universities from Madrid and Barcelona dominate the ranking, with the Autonomous University of Madrid taking the hot spot. No surprise there. What may result a bit surprising for some is that, for all its past glory, the University of Valladolid did not make it to the list. Food for thought.

May 2, 2005 - The following is an excerpt from the beautiful Pixar short [Boundin'](#) which may or may not have something to do with our institute and its circumstance: *"sometimes you're up and sometimes you're down. When you find that you're down, well, just look around, you still got a body, good legs and fine feet, get your head in the right place and, hey, you're complete"*. We earnestly agree that it's nice to know that there are Jackalopes around.

April 29, 2005 - The bothering issue of dead links in the Publications section has been on-going for several months. This was due to an irresolvable problem with the server where the files were stored. The files have now been moved to the much more reliable I3U server, which should put and end to this matter.

April 20, 2005 - Following up on the March 28 entry below, the [I3U website](#) is finally on-line. Any similarity of that site to this one may not be purely coincidental. Usual lurkers please note that the I3U site is primarily intended as a CSIC people thing. A link to the I3U website

has been placed on the bottom of the [Introduction](#) page (Note added on Jan 9, 2009: The I3U website went off-line Oct 2006).

April 19, 2005 - Another facelift for the site, version 4.2. The front page has been re-designed in a much less verbose manner. The previous front page has morphed into a new section, Introduction, which is accessible from the navigation menu on the left. Instead of the classical arachidonate and prostaglandin G₂ structures, the front page now features a rotating arachidonate molecule, courtesy of our grad student José Pindado.

April 14, 2005 - To make life more difficult for spammers, all e-mail links in this website have been removed. E-mail addresses are now displayed as image files. As far as we know, e-mail collector bots cannot extract information from images. As a minor downside, now you will have to double-check the spelling when manually entering our addresses in the To: field of your e-mail client.

March 28, 2005 - The two research labs of the Eicosanoid Research Division have entered into a strategic alliance with four other groups of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics. This has resulted in the creation of the Innate Immunity & Inflammation Unit (I3U), which will soon incorporate as a research department of the Spanish National Research Council in Valladolid. A website for the I3U is in progress.

March 25, 2005 - Good Friday, huge thing here in Valladolid. Returning to the place this section should have never abandoned, a.k.a. science, we would like to highlight the [recent work](#) by Adam Sapirstein and co-workers demonstrating that cytosolic group IVA phospholipase A₂ (cPLA₂) regulates cyclooxygenase-2 expression in mouse brain. These studies take advantage of the cPLA₂ knock-out mice, and thus provide genetic evidence for the sequential model of regulation of cyclooxygenase-2 induction by cPLA₂ products that we proposed a few years ago.

March 22, 2005 - It now appears that this humble website generates more interest among certain people than we ever expected. This entry is especially dedicated to them. Olimpio Montero and Alberto Sánchez Guijo are not lab technicians. They do not prepare buffer solutions, clean up glassware, or perform any other kind of technician service for us, almighty faculty personnel of the Eicosanoid Research Division. Olimpio and Alberto are in charge of equipment that lends service not to a few chosen ones, but to the whole Institute. However, destiny has it that the pieces of equipment that Olimpio and Alberto operate ultimately depend on the faculty personnel of the Eicosanoid Research Division. It is as simple as that. Everything else is gossip and distortion.

March 3, 2005 - Members of our division designed a [mini-brochure](#) for the Institute, to be used as our presentation card for some upcoming fair-like event. Not clear how long will the brochure be in use after said event, but that is okay; it was fun.

February 19, 2005 - The 2005 Official Group Picture of the Eicosanoid Research Division is [here](#)... incomplete, as not everyone was around at the time of taking the photograph. A complete pic may eventually follow.

February 11, 2005 - In the coming months the Institute is set to move to its own building, situated close to our present location in the Health Sciences Building, and also to the University Hospital. The building is still under construction. This [picture](#) was taken last week by our grad student Javi Casas. The laboratories of the Eicosanoid Research Division will be located in the upper floor along the building's longer side that is shown in the picture. The main entrance is in the opposite side.

February 4, 2005 - Sometimes it looks as though news pile up one on top of another, as this is the fourth entry in four straight days. Our long awaited toy (see Nov 15 entry) is finally a reality: a Bruker esquire6000 ion-trap mass spectrometer equipped with electrospray and atmospheric pressure chemical ionization sources, and interfaced with a Merck LacronElite high-performance liquid chromatograph. We are going to have much fun with this instrument.

February 3, 2005 – “*iPLA₂, more than simply a terminator*”. This is the sharp title of a well-written [comment](#) on our latest JBC article that appears in the Dec 2004 issue of the Spanish Biochemical Society Bulletin. Something in our work must have caught the author's attention, since we did not submit any information or were asked about this. We thank the Society for the free exposure.

February 2, 2005 - An inconsequential addition to yesterday's entry. This is for nostalgics. The old banner and front page layout can be found [here](#).

February 1, 2005 - Effective today, the Eicosanoid Laboratory is no more. It has been split into two, one headed by Dr. Jesús Balsinde, and the other by Dr. Balboa. These two research labs, together with the Mass Spectrometry and Confocal Microscopy Research Facilities constitute the new Eicosanoid Research Division. In accordance with this exciting news, a resplendent new banner has been created, and some minor adjustments to the look of the site have been introduced, i.e. slight variations in the scheme of colors, and setting Arial as the default font. This is site version 4.1.

January 21, 2005 - Javier Casas, a graduate student, officially joins the Eicosanoid Laboratory today. He is also a grad student in the lab of Prof. Sánchez-Crespo, adjacent to ours, so this is like a joint appointment for him.

January 18, 2005 - The Contact page has been refurbished with pics of some singular buildings of Valladolid (churches, of course, we are in Castile). Our old friend [Pablo de Valladolid](#), who was with us from the beginning, had to go. Gotta think where to place him now.

January 10, 2005 - More people for the the Eicosanoid Lab: Olimpio Montero, a Project Scientist of the Spanish Research Council, and José Pindado and Violeta Ruipérez, graduate students. Olimpio will be in charge of our spanking new mass spectrometry facility. By the way, our current designation as 'Eicosanoid Laboratory' is about to be changed soon.

January 4, 2005 - Happy New Year, folks. Last April, Jon Arm's group published a paper in JBC describing the Group V phospholipase A₂ null mice (Satake et al., JBC 279: 16488-16499, 2004). These animals exhibit decreased eicosanoid production in response to innate stimuli of the immune response, and thus provide genetic proof to the work that we and others were conducting during the 90's in *in vitro* systems. This is the article we distinguish as the most influential in our area of research for the last twelve months and, therefore, select as **Paper of the Year 2004**.

2004

December 22, 2004 - We celebrated today our traditional [Annual Christmas Luncheon](#). This year, Italian cuisine. Last year it was traditional Castilian, and the previous one, Chinese.

December 14, 2004 - Another new member for the Eicosanoid Lab, Alberto Sánchez Guijo. He is a Research Technician of the Spanish Research Council, and will be working in the confocal microscopy facility.

December 2, 2004 - This was a long time coming. We open today a new section, called [Schemes](#). As the name implies, this section houses miscellaneous material related with eicosanoid research (*Note added on Jan 9, 2009 - With regret, this section was removed Jan 2009*).

November 17, 2004 - We welcome Dr. Silvia López Burillo as a new member of our lab. Silvia is a Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in the University of Valladolid, and an expert in oxidative metabolism.

November 15, 2004 - Today is St. Albert the Great's day, patron saint of chemists all over the world (or at least the Catholic world). Great day today to learn that our favorite toy is on its way home. More on this later.

October 23, 2004 - The people of the International Bibliographical Centre are, no doubt, persistent. After distinguishing Dr. Balsinde as an "International Health Professional of the Year 2004" (see July 16 entry below), they are naming him now a "Leading Health Professional of the World 2005". Thanks much, although we are not buying any commemorative item this time either. (*Note added on Jan 18, 2005 - Due to a mistake, the server ate out the only digital copy of the nomination letter, which used to be accessible from a link in this entry*).

October 9, 2004 - The 2nd International Conference on Phospholipase A₂ was held in Berlin, Germany. Our lab could not miss such an event. Only one [pic](#), and not particularly good, sorry.

September 30, 2004 - Changes of personnel in the Eicosanoid Lab. On Sep 1, Mercedes Alonso, a Research Technician of the Spanish Research Council, joined the ranks. On an opposite note, Roberto Melero left the building. Personal life interests took precedence over his work in our lab. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

August 13, 2004 - The country is in the midst of its traditional August shutdown, when practically nothing gets done and nobody moves an unnecessary muscle. In spite of this, the Ministry of Education and Science has just announced the research projects to be funded for the period 2005-2008. Our lab has been treated nicely and most of what was applied for has been granted. Unfortunately however, funds for personnel have not been increased. This hurts our chances of hiring new people anytime soon, which is a real pity.

July 16, 2004 - A funny one. In a [letter](#) that arrived today, Dr. Balsinde was informed that the International Biographical Centre at Cambridge, England, had confirmed his nomination for the 'prestigious' *International Health Professional of the Year 2004* Award. Not clear how serious this is, but it looked like fun to mention it here. Besides, they themselves style the award as "an impressive accolade" and "a justifiably deserved honour"...

July 15, 2004 - An interesting paper, pompously titled "The scientific impact of nations" appeared today in Nature (430: 311-316, 2004). In the article, the quantity and quality of science in the 31 countries that account for 98% of the world's highly cited papers is measured. Spain ranks eighth in number of papers published during the period 1997-2001, which seems like an excellent position. However, in terms of scientific impact of the research, Spain drops to twelfth and, if the results are normalized to take into account the average number of citations per paper, Spain is seventeenth. Not very good, methinks.

June 1, 2004 - Today we are happy to welcome Montse Duque as a new member of the Eicosanoid Lab. Montse is a Research Technician of the Spanish Research Council.

May 25, 2004 - As the old Spanish proverb says, there is not a two without a three. After 'only' seven months, Dr. María Balboa's full appointment to faculty has been made official today.

April 27, 2004 - Another good one. By royal decree of April 17, the Ministry of Science and Technology has been suppressed. We now depend on the Ministry of Education and Science. Ain't this a great country or what?

April 15, 2004 - This is quite interesting. The Spanish Research Council has recently made public an employment offer that includes the creation of a research position in our institute, in the broad field of Cellular Physiology (Associate Professor rank, tenured) The position is not to be resolved by a local search committee, but rather at a national level, by a committee specifically designated to this effect. Dr. Jesús Balsinde has been selected for this committee as the Institute representative. This assures countless hours of fun for the coming months.

March 16, 2004 - With regard to the Madrid tragedy, we are grateful to those old friends and comrades of our San Diego days -some of whom we had not heard of in years- who have sent us messages of support: Andreu (currently in Barcelona, Spain), Yasu (Kobe, Japan), Ismael (Córdoba, Argentina), Kilian (Copenhagen, Denmark), Tina (still in San Diego), David (Durham, North Carolina), Bernardo (Toronto, Canada), Richard (also in Toronto, Canada).

March 12, 2004 - Yesterday, a terrorist attack on the city of Madrid, hometown of some of us, claimed the lives of two hundred people and injured over a thousand others. In remembrance of the victims of this senseless tragedy, a black ribbon is placed for a week on the front page of the site.

March 9, 2004 - An evaluation of the research achievements and general performance of our lab was conducted today in Madrid by people of the Ministry of Science and Technology. This institution provides a significant portion of our research funds.

February 29, 2004 - By popular demand, a page containing the most relevant articles (and .pdf links) published prior to the foundation of the Eicosanoid Lab has been created. The page can also be accessed from a link on the bottom of the Publications page
(Note added on Jan 9, 2009 - This page was removed Jan 2009).

January 14, 2004 - Did you ever wonder how the Eicosanoid Lab looked like? Quench your curiosity by looking at these [pics](#) (not of very good quality, pardon us).

January 13, 2004 - In the June 13 issue of Cell, Lauber *et al.* (113: 717-730, 2003) published a paper demonstrating that the lysophosphatidylcholine generated on the outer surface of apoptotic cells by calcium-independent phospholipase A₂ may act as an eat-me signal for disposal of the apoptotic cell. Of all papers published in our area of research during 2003, this is the paper we judge to be the most influential, and thus designate it as **Paper of the Year 2003**.

2003

November 21, 2003 - A little bit of extra exposure is always welcome. Our latest paper has made it into the [cover](#) of the Nov 28 issue of the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

November 14, 2003 - Another great day for our lab. Yolanda has had a baby boy, [Adrián](#)! He weighed in at 3.55 kg. His arrival was at 2:25 PM. Adrián is *Eicosanoid Lab Baby #2*. Baby #1 was [Sofía Balsinde](#), born on June 4, 2001.

November 5, 2003 - Today is a great day for our lab. Dr. María Balboa has been given tenure. She will be now an Associate Professor of the Spanish Research Council. Congratulations María!

October 17, 2003 - Find [here](#) a brief account of the history of the Eicosanoid Laboratory, from the humble beginnings to June 20, 2003, when this news section was opened.

September 10, 2003 - People from our lab attended the 8th International Conference on Eicosanoids held at Chicago, IL, U.S.A. Some pics of the event can be found [here](#).

June 20, 2003 - On this day in age, the Eicosanoid Laboratory Web Page goes through yet another facelift. Since its inception in March 2002 this is the fourth major change of appearance the site has endured. How long til the next overhaul?

Prior to June 2003

The Eicosanoid Laboratory was *officially* born September 2000, after the definitive arrival of Dr. Jesús Balsinde to the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics (IBGM) of the University of Valladolid. In the ensuing months, no one but Dr. Balsinde was around, so a website at that time seemed of little use. To be brutally honest, at that time there was not even a physical location for the lab. Well, there was a physical location (i.e. a space within four walls) but there was no lab at all. Construction of the lab began in July 2001 and was completed at the end of that summer. Not all were disgraces at that time though. An office and a fully functional computer (that meaning connected to the world wide web) were available from the very beginning.

The first person to join the lab was Yolanda Sáez, our technician, who stayed initially from June to November 2001. She would re-join in July 2002. Dr. María Balboa joined in November 2001, after obtaining a Research Assistant Professorship from the Spanish Research Council.

The [first version](#) of our website was published on-line March 2002. A slightly different version of the page, with white background and navy blue lettering would follow a little bit thereafter. At that time the site was located in the webspace provided by the IBGM. In May 2002 the site was moved to a private server and got its own domain name.

In July 2002, Rebeca Pérez, our first grad student, joined the lab.

[Version 2.0](#) of this website, featuring a spanking new logo and a lesser amateurish look was inaugurated Sep 2002 (pic below). Initially a white background was used, but it would later be changed to light blue in version 2.1.

[Version 3.0](#) saw the light in March 2003. Almost everything was changed from the previous version to this one. It would last until June 2003, when the current version (4.0) was

published. It goes without saying that version 4.0 again changed practically everything, including the logo. The one only thing that remains from the very beginning is the pic showing the structures of arachidonic acid and prostaglandin G₂ on the front page.

With [version 4.0](#), a News page was created to serve as a sort of blog (web log) for this site. From this point on, the News page reports on all the exciting novelties that this lab and the people who form it get through. But before we finish with this brief lab history, just mention that Roberto Melero, a prospective graduate student, joined in June 2003.