



SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF REPRODUCTION Newsletter

Volume 24, Number 3

October 2007

From the President—

SSR: alive, thriving, and improving all the time

The title of my address is, indeed, very true. In speaking with a colleague the other day, we both agreed that our Society is getting better all the time. The founding members had a great vision for a society in which our discipline could begin, develop, and improve with time. I am not certain that even they could have envisioned a society that has risen to the level we enjoy today. I believe it is fair to say that by most measures, including the quality of our Annual Meeting, the quality of our journal, and the administration of our Society's business, we are better than ever and continuing to improve. One example of this improvement could be seen in the 2007 Annual Meeting in San Antonio. While I was unable to attend this meeting in person, I was constantly in contact with individuals who did attend and was delighted to learn that the quality of the scientific program and the social events was first rate. This was in no small part due to the wonderful leadership of President Mitch Eddy and Program Chair Marty Matzuk, who both worked tirelessly in putting the program together, and to John McCarrey, who put in many hours to assure that a good time would be had by all in the Riverwalk City. Our congratulations and sincere thanks go to this group of dedicated members. Once again, the glue that held all of this in place was our wonderful administrative office. Special thanks go to the entire crew for helping to make San Antonio yet another memorable event to be added to the long list of memorable SSR events. Space does not allow me to mention the names of all the individuals who worked so hard on behalf of our Society, but you know who you are, and I thank you profusely for your efforts.

The future promises to be just as exciting. Plans are well under way to hold our first ever "off shore" SSR meeting. The 2008 Annual Meeting will be held in the beautiful setting of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. It will take place at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa, with the entire resort being booked by SSR for this

monumental event. The 2008 meeting will be held in conjunction with, and on the same site as, the inaugural World Congress on Reproductive Biology (WCRB) being organized by Joy Pate. The WCRB will include a program formulated by the efforts of four sister societies including, in addition to SSR, the Australian Society for Reproductive Biology (SRB), the United Kingdom Society for Reproduction and Fertility (SRF), and the Japanese Society for Animal Reproduction (JSAR). The WCRB will be held May 24–26 and the SSR meeting May 27–30, 2008. We greatly encourage SSR members to attend both of these meetings; each will be a unique event and the combination of the two promises rich scientific, cultural, and social experiences. The programs for both conferences are far along in their development, and more details can be found in other sections of this Newsletter. I have done some preliminary homework with regard to airfares to Kona from various parts of the United States and have found that fares are not nearly as expensive as I thought they might be. Besides, what can be a better reason to save one's money than for a trip to beautiful Hawaii to be amongst great scientists and great friends, all in a storybook setting? We look forward to seeing you in Kona in May.

Our Society's journal, *Biology of Reproduction*, has enjoyed great success in recent years. Under the very capable guidance of Editors-in-Chief John Eppig and Mary Ann Handel, the quality of the articles appearing in the journal has increased significantly. It is due to their vision, diligence, and absolute dedication to the task of improving our journal that *BOR* enjoys the lofty perch that it has attained. The excellent job being performed by the Associate Editors and the Board of Reviewing Editors should also be noted. John and Mary Ann will remain as Editors-in-Chief until June 2009. The task of identifying replacements for the Editor-in-Chief position for *BOR* is ongoing at this time and is in the hands of the

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Publications Committee, headed by the current Co-Chair Bob Burghardt. Every effort is being made to find an excellent team so that *BOR* will remain the journal of choice for the publication of the best articles that the field of reproductive biology has to offer. The journal has been, and will remain, in good hands for many years to come, and a great debt of gratitude is due John and Mary Ann for the outstanding job they are doing.

A recent and very important addition to the Associate Editors was the appointment of Dr. Richard Stouffer as Review Editor. Dick's task is to encourage the publication of timely and significant review articles in *BOR*; thus, the membership is strongly encouraged to present him with ideas for the writing and submission of reviews of contemporary interest and importance.

Also of critical importance to the journal is the issue of "open access" and the maintenance of our journal-generated revenue stream should open access be mandated. In this light, I take this opportunity to request that the membership donate generously to the Legacy Fund, whose purpose has been not only to provide funds for the digital conversion of back issues of *BOR* (completed in 2005) and to maintain this archive, but also to protect the Society against the sudden loss of funds should circumstances like open access threaten the revenue produced by our journal. This situation will become all the more acute with the continuing decline in library subscriptions and inevitable increase in publishing costs.

In addition to the Legacy Fund, you are also encouraged to give generously to our Society in the way of donations to the Endowment Fund. We simply must increase the endowment of our Society to allow us the flexibility to deal with both expected and unexpected situations as they arise. We will never be as rich as the Endocrine Society, but we should be rich enough to allow us to provide you with the very best that science has to offer at the Annual Meeting and not have to worry about how we pay for the speakers every year. To do this and other things worthy of our Society, we need additional revenue beyond annual membership dues, meeting registration fees, etc. Our goal is to have an Endowment Fund of one million dollars, and we are approximately one-quarter of the way there at this time. I encourage each of you to donate something to SSR, regardless of how small you think your donation might be, as this is exactly the manner in which our Endowment Fund and our Legacy Fund will grow and allow us to become an even stronger society. There are several great examples of the generosity of certain SSR members. Let us increase these examples of generosity—it is money you may never miss, but it will be very important to your Society.

SSR also continues to recognize excellence in science and service within its membership. As such, the Carl G. Hartmann Award for 2007 (supported this year by EMD Serono Research Institute) was awarded to Dr. Bert O'Malley for his peerless contributions to the field of steroid hormone receptor biology. The Research Award (supported by NV Organon) was presented to Dr. Richard Stouffer for his many contributions to the field of ovarian physiology, most specifically in the area of non-human primate ovarian function. The Distinguished Service Award (also supported by EMD Serono Research Institute) was so rightly given to Dr. Bruce Murphy, who does just about everything for SSR including the very successful handling of its money—no small feat in recent years. Finally, the New Investigator Award (supported by the Virendra B. Mahesh New Investigator Fund) was presented to Dr. Derek McLean, who has embarked on his independent career in the study of male germ stem cells. Indeed, our Society continues to be able to count the best and the brightest amongst its membership. As always, special thanks go to all of the organizations that support the Annual Meeting and its awards. These include the NICHD, the USDA, the Mahesh Neuroendocrine Program and New Investigator Funds, EMD Serono Research Institute, NV Organon, the Lalor Foundation, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the R. H. Foote Lectureship Fund, the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund, and CONRAD.

At this time I would like to make a sincere request to all of the membership that you carefully ponder and then act on providing the Society with nominations for the awards presented by the Society every year. This is a major function of SSR in that as a learned society we should very much be in the business of recognizing the exceptional work being performed by our members. The Awards Committee always seems to have a paucity of nominations in the face of an extremely large number of worthy individuals. The process is not difficult and the nomination of worthy members by you should be considered an honor and not a task. To nominate an individual, simply go to the SSR Web site (www.ssr.org), click on "About" and then click on "Awards/Grants" to obtain the criteria for each of the Society's awards. Nominations may be sent to Dr. Robert Cushman (bob.cushman@ars.usda.gov), chair of the Awards Committee.

SSR also continues to place trainee involvement in all aspects of the Society's undertaking at a high priority. As such, SSR continues to provide support for travel awards, trainee research awards, the Trainee/Mentor Luncheon, the Trainee Placement Service, and the Trainee Forum. In addition, many, and perhaps most, of the plat-

form and poster session presentations at the Annual Meeting are given by trainees. Also, every effort is made on the part of the Program Committee to include trainees as chairs and co-chairs of the various scientific sessions wherever possible. Trainees also have their own committee, the Trainee Affairs Committee, and have two trainee representatives present at all Board of Directors meetings. Your Society is dedicated to the training of our next generation of scientists and, as such, makes substantial efforts to include them in all aspects of its workings.

SSR could not begin to function without the dedication of its membership to the many tasks at hand. I was thoroughly buoyed by the overwhelmingly positive response I received when putting the various permanent and ad hoc committees of SSR together these past few months. The universal willingness of our members to serve, and to serve well, is palpable. The Society owes all of you who have agreed to work on these committees, and particularly those of you who have agreed to act as chairpersons, a large debt of gratitude. Special thanks are due to our outgoing officers: Past-President Bill Thatcher, who did a terrific job in all 3 years of his tenure on the Board; Directors Andy LaBarbera and John Nilson, whose wisdom was conspicuous at all Board meetings; Buck Hales, who wore out a computer as our most competent secretary; and Olga Bolden-Tiller, Trainee Representative, who exemplified the intelligence, creative thinking, willingness to take on new challenges, and leadership qualities so necessary for the future of our Society. With equal thanks we welcome the new Board members, who agreed to stand for election and prevailed, namely, Asgi Fazeablas as President-Elect, Susan Quirk as Secretary, Janice Bailey and Janice Evan as Directors, and Rebecca Bott as Trainee Representative. Finally, the worst kept secret in our Society is the magnificent job being done by Judy Jansen and her associates in running the business aspects of SSR. In reality, they do much more than just see to the business of the Society as it would be very hard to find a more dedicated group of individuals who help with all phases of our work. There are no sacred boundaries for this group when help is needed. Their continuing dedication, loyalty, expertise, and willingness to help are greatly appreciated.

In summary, I do believe that our Society is alive, thriving, and improving all the time. It will take efforts and diligence to keep it that way, but I have never come into contact with a group of individuals, who happen to make up our membership, more capable of keeping SSR on this course. ■

—Doug Stocco

Recognize your colleagues— Nominate them for SSR awards

The Awards Committee urges SSR members to exercise the privilege and responsibility of membership by nominating individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the science of reproductive biology. Four major awards are presented annually.

- The Carl G. Hartman Award is SSR's highest award and recognizes a career of research and scholarly activities in reproductive biology.
- The SSR Research Award recognizes an active, regular member of the Society for outstanding research published during the previous 6 years.
- The SSR Distinguished Service Award (sponsored by Serono Reproductive Biology Institute) recognizes an individual who has demonstrated unselfish service and leadership in advancing the discipline of reproductive biology.
- The SSR New Investigator Award (sponsored by the Virendra B. Mahesh New Investigator Endowment Fund) recognizes an active, regular member of the Society for outstanding research completed and published within 10 years after receiving the Ph.D. or equivalent professional degree.

Guidelines for nominating candidates for awards are published in the September issue of *BOR* and posted on the SSR Web site <www.ssr.org/Awards.html>. Nominating materials for these awards must be received by December 1, 2007, at the address below.

Please assist the Awards Committee in carrying out this important function of the Society by sending nominations to me at the address below.

Supporting documents may be sent by fax or mail, but the preferred method is by e-mail to bob.cushman@ars.usda.gov. The nominations will be reviewed by all members of the Award Committee. ■

—Robert A. Cushman, Chair
SSR Awards Committee
USDA/ARS/USMARC, Reproduction Research Unit
P.O. Box 166, Clay Center, NE 68933
Phone: 402-762-4186
Fax: 402-762-4382

Complete minutes of the 2007 Business Meeting held in San Antonio will be posted on the SSR Web site at a later date.

2007 SSR awards to trainees and minorities

Trainee Research Awards – platform presentations

(Sustaining support from EMD Serono Research Institute)

First Place

Daniel J. Trombly, Northwestern University

Second Place

Denise Archambeault, University of Illinois

Third Place

Catherine Christian, University of Virginia,

Finalists

Simon-Pierre Demers, Universite de Montreal,

Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada

Matthew Dyson, Texas Tech University

Jillian Guttormsen, Utah State University

Chia-Feng Liu, University of Illinois

Trainee Research Awards – poster presentations

(Sustaining support from EMD Serono Research Institute)

First Place

Ivraym B. Barsoum, M.D., University of Illinois

Second Place

Ankur K. Nagaraja, Baylor College of Medicine

Third Place

Kalidou Ndiaye, Ohio State University

Finalists

Kouyou Akiyama, Okayama University, Japan

Hakan A. Berg, University of Texas at Austin

Lalor Foundation Merit Awards

(Sustaining support from Lalor Foundation, Inc.)

Kouyou Akiyama, Okayama University, Japan

Denise Archambeault, University of Illinois

Ivraym B. Barsoum, M.D., University of Illinois

Hakan A. Berg, University of Texas at Austin

Theodore Chauvin, Washington State University

Catherine Christian, University of Virginia

Mabel Cortes, University of California, Irvine

Simon-Pierre Demers, Universite de Montreal,

Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada

Gwen Dressing, University of Texas at Austin

Matthew Dyson, Texas Tech University

Christine Glidewell-Kenney, Northwestern University

Jillian Guttormsen, Utah State University

Aileen Keating, University of Arizona

Lyne Lafontaine, Universite du Quebec a

Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, Canada

Chia-Feng Liu, University of Illinois

National Research Initiative Merit Awards

(Sustaining support from the USDA/CSREES National Research Initiative)

Kim Brown, University of Idaho

Kylie Dunning, University of Adelaide, Australia

Jennifer Farmer, Texas A&M University

Morgan Haugen, University of Notre Dame

Goo Jang, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

Jinsong Li, The Rockefeller University

Wei Ma, University of Pennsylvania

Nune Markosyan, Eastern Virginia Medical School

Kalidou Ndiaye, Ohio State University

Amy Oakley, University of Michigan

Maxime Sasseville, University Laval, Quebec, Canada

Brandon Sitzmann, University of Maryland

Burroughs Wellcome Minority Travel Awards

(Sustaining support from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund)

Junior Faculty

Euridice Carmona, Ph.D., Hopital Maisonneuve-Rosemont, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Trainees

Claudia Andreu-Vieyra, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine

Petrice Brown, Ph.D., The Rockefeller University

Maelanie M. Galima, University of Texas at Austin

Shaye K. Lewis, Texas A&M University



SSR President Doug Stocco checks out the venue for the Society's 2008 Annual Meeting in Hawaii.

SSR members benefit from advocacy and education resources

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) serves as the voice of biomedical research scientists in our nation's capital and has been successful in securing research funding for science as well as mitigating the threat of onerous regulatory proposals. However, as former House Speaker Tip O'Neill famously declared, "All politics is local." Scientists acting as advocates for science, both at home and in Washington, can make a tremendous difference on a host of science policy issues, from federal funding to embryonic stem cell research. This is why FASEB provides a variety of tools and services designed to help researchers become science advocates and speak out for science. Below are just a few of the resources FASEB provides—as a member of SSR, one of FASEB's 21 member societies, you are free to use all of the resources on FASEB's Web site (<http://opa.faseb.org>).

- **FASEB Washington Update and legislative action center:** The *FASEB Washington Update* is a biweekly electronic publication that keeps you informed of events in Washington relevant to scientists, as well as FASEB's activities advocating on your behalf. Subscription to the *Washington Update* is free. To sign up, just visit FASEB's legislative action center (<http://capwiz.com/faseb/home/>) and click on the link to join the E-Action list. Members of the E-Action list also receive infrequent legislative alerts at times when their action can make a critical difference on key legislative issues. All members of SSR, regardless of whether they subscribe to the E-Action list, can also use the FASEB legislative action center to contact their members of congress or local media outlets on issues important to you as a scientist. Simply type in your ZIP code and contacting your member of Congress or reaching your local media is only a click away. In addition, the FASEB site keeps track of legislation that our societies' members may be interested in. You can view the status of important bills, track how your congressional members voted, and see where FASEB stands on particular pieces of legislation.

- **NIH, animal research, and clinical research advocacy slides:** FASEB has produced a number of advocacy PowerPoint presentations that are downloadable and customizable for use by society member scientists. These include educational presentations on animal research and clinical research, as well as a set of slides showing the benefits of NIH-funded research. The NIH advocacy slide set has been customized at the state level, so you can download the slide set best suited to your local audience. FASEB leadership and society member scientists have used these slides in speaking with their members of congress, local community organizations, trainees, or scientific colleagues. FASEB welcomes any additional data for the state-level slides or hearing how you have used these tools in your own advocacy efforts.

- **Research funding and training data resources:** For those interested in trends and data related to federal funding of biomedical research or training and career development of life scientists, FASEB has compiled data from national surveys and federal agencies into a set of

downloadable slides and figures. Information on funding ranges from the NIH budget, to the number of competing awards, to success rates, to average grant size. The recently released training resource includes data on graduate enrollment, doctoral awards, postdoctoral employment, and employment status. Members of FASEB societies are encouraged to use these data for their own presentations and advocacy efforts, as well as to foster an informed dialogue on these critical issues.

- **Evolution Advocacy Toolkit:** As part of our continuing effort to ensure that evolution remains an integral part of high-quality science education, FASEB has developed a Web site aimed at providing tools for scientists interested in advocating on behalf of evolution education. The toolkit provides an array of resources for both scientists and concerned citizens to use for educating and advocating on evolution. This includes communication materials such as slide presentations and sample op-eds addressing the importance of evolution, as well as background information summarizing the science of evolutionary biology. In addition, the Web site offers tips on communicating with the public and local officials about evolution and its inclusion in science classes.

- **Conflict-of-interest toolkit:** Over the past 2 years, FASEB has led the scientific community in a proactive effort to adopt more consistent policies and practices for disclosing and managing financial relationships between academia and industry in biomedical research. As part of this activity, the Federation has worked with our member societies to create a series of recommendations and framework for a national guideline. The conflict-of-interest toolkit is a Web site designed to help researchers, institutions, publications, and industry put into practice FASEB's recommendations.

- **Breakthroughs in Bioscience:** A colorfully illustrated series of articles designed to explain to a nonscientific audience the connection between basic research and resultant technologies or medical advancements, FASEB's *Breakthroughs in Bioscience* are distributed to all members of congress, educational groups, and patient advocacy organizations. The objective of the series is to tell the story behind the science, to describe the often circuitous and serendipitous path from the bench scientist to the clinician treating patients, and to highlight the role of critical aspects of science, from animal models to federal funding. The nearly two dozen articles, ranging from statins to MRI to antiviral therapies, are available on our Web site in PDF format or in hardcopy by contacting the FASEB Office of Public Affairs. FASEB would be delighted to send free copies of these articles to members of SSR for teaching or advocacy. ■

—Carrie D. Wolinetz
FASEB Liaison to the SSR Public Affairs Committee
Director of Communications
Office of Public Affairs
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
E-mail: cwolinetz@faseb.org

Plans for program at 2008 meeting are well under way

We are well on our way toward planning an outstanding scientific program for SSR's 2008 Annual Meeting in Hawaii! The theme for the meeting will be ***Reproductive Biology—Basic Discoveries that Impact Our Lives***. This theme is intended to reflect the fact that while many of us focus our efforts on basic research in reproductive biology, many of the discoveries that have emanated from that research have led to profound advances in the clinical, biomedical, industrial, and/or agricultural arenas. Examples of current, cutting-edge research in reproductive biology will be highlighted in the plenary talks at next year's meeting. The Keynote Address will be presented by **Dr. Rudolf Jaenisch** from the Whitehead Institute. For the President's Symposium, President Doug Stocco has chosen to honor the research career of **Dr. Ryuzo Yanagimachi** from the University of Hawaii. Yana, who will turn 80 years young in 2008, will present an overview of his perspectives on how reproductive biology has progressed during his venerable tenure as a researcher in this field. He will then introduce two plenary talks on current topics related to his interests presented by **Dr. Richard Schultz** from the University of Pennsylvania and **Dr. Takashi Shinohara** from Kyoto University in Japan. In addition, we will have two truly "state-of-the-art" lectures presented by **Dr. Kevin Eggan** from Harvard University and **Dr. Janet Rossant** from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. The ASRM Distinguished Researcher for 2007, **Dr. Robert Taylor** from Emory University School of Medicine, will present one of the exchange lectures. The 2007 SRF New Investigator, **Dr. Alexandra Reis** from Newcastle University, will present the second exchange lecture.

The 2008 Program Committee has selected the topics for the 15 minisymposia that will be presented at next year's meeting. They include "A new frontier in ovarian cellular physiology: Ion channels of endocrine ovarian cells and their regulators"; "When does implantation begin?"; "Lymphocyte-promoted endometrial angiogenesis and its relation to pregnancy success"; "Factors affecting oocyte quality: A large animal model"; "Evolution of egg polarity"; "DNA damage in sperm and effects on offspring"; "Spermatogonial renewal and differentiation: Comparative aspects"; "Effects and mechanisms of action of environmental endocrine disruptors on female reproduction"; "Role of PTGS2 and arachidonic acid and prostaglandins in the testis"; "Monitoring cell-cell conversations in the epid-

idymis"; "Small RNAs and reproduction"; "Novel insights into gonadotropin regulation"; "Transcription factors and cell-signaling essential to maintain the niche in the mammalian testis"; "Epigenetic reprogramming of the embryo"; and "Novel contraceptives for the 21st century." We are currently in the process of selecting discussion leaders and speakers for each of these minisymposia.

Please note that the 2008 Annual Meeting will be held significantly earlier in the year than normal—May 27–30. As a result, the deadline for submission of abstracts will also be earlier than usual—January 15, 2008. As always, platform sessions and poster sessions will be compiled on the basis of submitted abstracts. So please start planning now for the abstracts you would like to submit for the 2008 meeting!

The 2008 SSR Annual Meeting will be take place immediately following the inaugural meeting of the World Congress on Reproductive Biology (WCRB), which will be held May 24–26 at the same location in Hawaii. The WCRB will be sponsored jointly by SSR and three of our sister societies from other countries—the Japanese Society of Reproduction, the Society for Reproduction and Fertility, and the Society for Reproductive Biology. Joy Pate from SSR is the primary organizer of the WCRB. Registration, abstract submission, and all other arrangements for the WCRB will be conducted separately from those for the SSR meeting. Thus, you will have an opportunity to attend two outstanding meetings on reproductive biology for the price of a single airfare!

Key information for SSR's 2008 Annual Meeting

Dates: May 27–30, 2008

Location: Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa, Kona Coast, Hawaii

*Abstract deadline: **January 15, 2008***

We look forward to seeing everyone at what promises to be an outstanding and enjoyable meeting in Hawaii next year! ■

*—John McCarrey, Chair
2008 Program Committee*

New Members

Regular

Eva Andersson
Guylain Boissonneault
Zuping He
Charles Long
Kichiya Suzuki
Denise Vizziano

Associate

Saeeda Muhsen-Alanssari
Mundhir Ridha-Albarzanchi

Trainee

Yasuyuki Abe
Behrouz Aflatoonian
Reza Aflatoonian
Mallikarjuna Basavarajappa
Ammon Bayles
Brooke Amanda Bowling
Yvonne Brown
Esther Calderon
Omar Camargo
Jin-won Choi
Rebecca Cockrum
Valeria Conforti

Erin Curry
Jacqueline Draper
Raul Fernandez Gonzalez
Jean Magloire Feugang
Colette Floyd
Marie-Claude Gagnon
Holly Giannatselis
Vanessa Heagle
Melodee Heidmiller
Emily Holick
Xiaoying Hou
Chao Jiang
Le Jiang
Christine Johnson
Nak Kyun Jung
Han Seung Kang
Brian Kelty
Baek Chul Kim
In-Wook Kim
Sun Gyun Kim
Sung Tae Kim
Young-Hwan Kim
Sehwon Koh
Morgan Krause
Eu-Gene Lee
Hee Sun Lee
Rongfeng Li
Yichen Lin

Gayle Linger
Christianne Magee
Randi Manier-Wilson
Amanda McLane
Liesl Nel-Themaat
Stephanie Nichols
Jenna Nyholt de Prada
Julie Pack
Louis Paoella
Joonghoon Park
Michael Peoples
Soliman Peris
Radhakrishna Pulikanti
Yan Shi Quan
Ann Ratchford
Jacob Redel
Royce Daniel Rodriguez
Nelida Rodriguez-Osorio
Amy Schroder
Nantawan SoonKlang
Ahmed M. Taiyeb
Kimberly Tessanne
Surabi Veeraragavan
Francisco Viramontes
David Walker
Chunmin Wang
Hehai Wang
Hongfeng Wang

Jennifer Williams
Qiaqia Wu
Mingang Xu
Peili Yao
Jonathan Yeh
Cho-Rong Yoo
Julia Young

Change in status

To Regular:
Olga U. Bolden-Tiller
Adrienne Crosier
Joshua Johnson
Clay A. Lents
Afia Naaz
Laura Reinholdt
Taeyoung Shin
Jeremy Thompson

To Associate:
Andrei P. Alexenko

To Trainee:
Tamika T. Atkinson
Mary Lynn Johnson
Yufen Xie

Where is the next generation of SSR members?

Good news! SSR membership, as of July 2007, has increased. Many thanks to the diligent work of the Membership Committee and to each of you who renewed or joined and recruited new members. However, the question demanding an answer today is, "Where is the next generation of SSR members?"

Scientific societies, such as SSR, face serious challenges. The arrival of electronic publishing, which has made scientific journals available to us without being a member of a specific society, has decreased the need to be a member of a scientific society. Likewise, the proliferation of scientific meetings provides opportunities to attend specialty meetings besides the annual meeting hosted by scientific societies. There are certainly many other reasons for belonging to a scientific society besides getting the journal and attending the annual meeting. Nonetheless, in many trainees' minds, these two reasons are the prime ones. This particular mind-set does not bode well for the future of scientific societies, including SSR.

So what is the solution? From my vantage point, as a mentor of many trainees over the years and also

as a faculty member at the University of Illinois where we have a strong reproductive biology program with a large number of trainees, the solution is YOU if you are a mentor of trainees. Just as we spend many hours guiding trainees in research—whether it is designing experiments, analyzing data, writing manuscripts, just to mention a few responsibilities—we must also impart to the trainees the value of scientific societies and the importance of their belonging and being active participants. Trainees who know the value of scientific societies will most likely make the transition from trainee to regular member when the opportunity arises. However, if we as mentors do not impart to trainees the value, importance, and even excitement of belonging to SSR, who will do the job? ■

—Janice Bahr, Chair
Membership Committee

Report on Minority Affairs activities at the 2007 Annual Meeting

The mission of the Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) is to enhance the participation of minorities in the Society and in the field of reproductive sciences. For the past 3 years, we have been fortunate to have received funding from Burroughs Wellcome to organize activities toward this mandate. These activities focus around the SSR Annual Meetings and include:

- ◆ Granting five travel awards (one to a junior faculty member and four to trainees) to underrepresented minorities to attend the meeting;

- ◆ Organizing the Minority Affairs Symposium, which includes a 50-minute talk by an accomplished underrepresented minority scientist and subsequent discussion among the speaker and audience;

- ◆ Arranging the Minority Dinner for invited participants, including the Symposium speaker; the Burroughs Wellcome travel grant awardees; FASEB-MARC travel grant awardees; MAC members; representatives from NIH, USDA, and FASEB; the *Biology of Reproduction* editor; SSR Board of Directors members and officers; and interested SSR members;

- ◆ Manning the MAC booth to offer information on available funding sources and articles of interest to minority scientists/trainees, as well as to provide access as a connecting place among minorities and other SSR members.

The 2007 Burroughs Wellcome minority travel grant awardees are named on page 4 of this newsletter.

With the increased funds from Burroughs Wellcome, we were able to have a Minority Affairs sit-down dinner with 70 seats. Dr. Trevor Archer, Laboratory Chief, Laboratory of Molecular Carcinogenesis, NIEHS, was the speaker at the Minority Affairs Symposium. Unique to this year's event, Dr. Archer talked about his excellent scientific work (on the impact of chromatin and epigenetics on gene transcription) and pointed out factors that facilitated his career development despite of his background as an underrepresented minority. His excellent and stimulating talk inspired the audience to further suggest in the discussion session that the scientific program of SSR's Annual Meetings must include underrepresented minority scientists as regular symposium/panel speakers. This issue was further discussed in our annual MAC meeting, and the message was taken to the Board of Directors by our past and present MAC liaisons (Buck Hales and Janice Evans). As a result, underrepresented minority scientists will be included in the 2008 Annual Meeting program. Names of scientists were suggested

by MAC members and NIH representatives via e-mail and were passed on to the chair of the Program Committee. The underrepresented minority speaker(s) will be invited to attend the Minority Affairs dinner and stay afterward for an open discussion on career issues for underrepresented minorities.

Also discussed during the Minority Symposium was the topic of networking and sharing experiences among underrepresented minority members. In this regard, the five Burroughs Wellcome travel awardees have been asked to write about their experiences as underrepresented minorities in their career development. These accounts will be posted on the SSR/MAC Web link in the future. Other matters discussed included the improvement of the MAC Web links and related issues on diversity (e.g., treatment of women scientists in academe). For the MAC Web links, please visit www.ssr.org/MinorityAffairsCommittee.html and www.ssr.org/MinorityLinks.html.

We are interested to hear from all SSR members on minority affairs issues. Please send your comments to me at <ntanphaichitr@ohri.ca>. ■

—Nongnuj Tanphaichitr, Chair
Minority Affairs Committee

Topics on reproduction and environment sought

The Committee on Reproduction and the Environment (CoRE) met during the Annual Meeting in San Antonio. In addition to the appointed members of CoRE, all interested SSR members were invited to attend the meeting. Members interested in being involved in CoRE pursuits have been included to our e-mail list.

During the meeting, we discussed potential CoRE activities. The primary focus of CoRE has been to propose symposia for the Annual Meeting. We also discussed collaboration with other societies, particularly the upcoming WCRB conference in 2008. CoRE members have suggested a number of symposia. One of the minisymposia at the 2008 SSR meeting will be on the topic of endocrine-disrupting chemicals and their effects on females. CoRE has provided suggestions for a session on environment and reproduction at the WCRB. The concept of developing a white paper or review for submission to the *Biology of Reproduction* was also discussed. We will continue these activities

and work with other SSR committees to see what CoRE can do to enhance upcoming SSR Annual Meetings.

Potential CoRE symposia topics suggested at the CoRE meeting include:

- Aging and the environment
- Energetic issues and pharmaceuticals
- Endocrine disruption
- Environmental effects on males and females
- Fetal origins of adult disease
- Gametes
- Gender ratio
- Geophysical cues
- Human encroachment
- Nutrition
- Reproductive disease
- Social environment

The minisymposia generally require a chair, co-chair (usually a junior scientist), and three speakers (each about 25 minutes with 5 minutes for questions). We encourage SSR members to provide other suggestions. ■

—*Mary Ann Ottinger, Chair
Committee on Reproduction and the Environment*

Emeritus/Senior Breakfast— Recollections of SSR's first president

The Emeritus Committee hosted the third Emeritus/Senior Breakfast at the Annual Meeting in San Antonio. During the breakfast, the many contributions of Dr. Robert Melampy, the first president of SSR, were recognized. Drs. Bill Day and Lloyd Anderson, former graduate students of Dr. Melampy at Iowa State University, did a marvelous job of covering the unique mentoring style of Dr. Melampy. Dr. Stephen Ford, former faculty member at ISU, recounted humorous aspects of his many discussions with the then-retired Dr. Melampy. The breakfast was well attended with emeritus and senior members, officers, and even a few trainees. The committee is developing plans to host the fourth breakfast during the Society's 2008 meeting in Hawaii.

Biographical sketches of the scientists honored at the three breakfasts are being prepared and will appear on the SSR Web site later this year or early in 2008. The committee is considering the development of a historical poster covering scientific contributions and leaders of the Society for display during Annual Meetings or on other appropriate occasions. ■

—*Fredrick Stormshak, Chair
Emeritus Committee*

Trainees look ahead to Hawaii

I would like to send a heartfelt thank-you to all of the trainees who made the meeting in San Antonio a success by volunteering their time before and during the proceedings. This year more than 50 of us were involved actively in staffing the Placement Service, giving directions to off-site events, helping with audiovisuals, and in general making sure the many activities ran smoothly.

I also want to thank Olga Bolden-Tiller, our outgoing senior Trainee Representative, for the hard work she put in during her term, and to welcome Rebecca Bott, a Ph.D. student at Colorado State University, as our new junior Trainee Representative.

Although this year's meeting (and dance!) is still fresh in our memories, I encourage you to start thinking to our next meeting in beautiful Hawaii. We are planning to offer all trainees the chance to participate in its organization, and we'll have more initiatives available for all of you at the meeting. In particular, we will organize a Career Development Center where you will be able to meet and interact with professionals working in scientific careers outside of academia. Through the help of FASEB, we are also organizing a session with a professional who will be available to help trainees build stronger curricula vitae.

The next few months will see many important events for SSR trainees, from a design contest for next year's T-shirt to the election of the next Trainee Representative. You'll hear from us soon, and we welcome your participation in all SSR activities. ■

—*Rita Vassena
Trainee Affairs Committee*



Pool area at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa.

News from the Reproductive Sciences Branch, NICHD

Input sought on NIH peer review

Efforts are under way to obtain your input on the grants process, particularly peer review, with the ultimate goal of optimizing the system to allow scientists to spend more time doing the science rather than on the application/review process. The NIH director, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, has established two working groups to gather input both internally and externally. According to Dr. Zerhouni, the findings from both groups will be integrated into a white paper that will prioritize ideas for pilot testing. The deadline for input was September 7, so hopefully you have expressed your opinions on this important initiative. Additional information on this process is available at <www.nih.gov/about/director/newsletter/Summer2007.htm>.

Major roadmap initiative on epigenetics to be launched

A major NIH-wide initiative on the epigenetics of human health and disease is set to be launched in fiscal year 2008. The science of epigenetics deals with changes in gene expression and function that are not due to alterations in DNA sequence. The first initiatives are likely to focus on development of reference epigenomes, creation of computational infrastructure, and technology/reagent development. NICHD plans to participate in this trans-NIH effort on epigenetics, so stay tuned!

Funding opportunity announcement

It is becoming increasingly clear that the quality of oocytes and preimplantation embryos impacts human fertility. Indeed, oocyte/embryo quality may be the single most critical factor influencing success rates in assisted reproduction. In response to this emerging area of importance, the RSB launched a program on female health and egg quality in 2003. In an effort to continue this program, the RSB has issued a Program Announcement (PAR) entitled **Female Health and Egg Quality** (PAR-07-350, <grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-07-350.html>), that conveys the continued interest of the RSB in receiving grant applications in this area. Applications submitted in response to this FOA are due October 19. Due to the nature of the science, these applications will be evaluated by a special review panel. Although there are no set-aside funds to support the

applications submitted in response to this FOA, such applications will be given priority in making funding decisions. ■

—*Louis V. DePaolo, Chief
Reproductive Sciences Branch
Center for Population Research
NICHD, NIH, DHHS
E-mail: ld38p@nih.gov*

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Fall 2008 EPA Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellowships for Graduate Environmental Study

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as part of its STAR program, is offering graduate fellowships for master's and doctoral students in environmental fields of study. The deadline for receipt of pre-applications is October 23, 2007 at 4:00 pm EST. Subject to availability of funding, the EPA plans to award approximately 65 new fellowships by July 31, 2008. Master's students may receive support for a maximum of 2 years. Doctoral students may be supported for a maximum of 3 years, usable over a period of 4 years. The fellowship program provides up to \$37,000 per year of support per fellowship. More information can be found at <http://es.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2008/2008_star_fellow.html>.

Americas Fellowship in Reproductive Sciences (F05)

The goal of the Americas Fellowship in Reproductive Sciences Program is to provide a unique opportunity to qualified Latin American reproductive scientists, at junior or mid-career level, to receive up to 3 years of research training in the United States or Canada. The number of awards that will be funded under this program announcement is contingent upon the quality of the applications received, the availability of funds, and the program priorities of the NICHD. This program announcement uses the international research fellowship (F05) award mechanism. To access the full announcement of the fellowship, please visit <<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-453.html>>.

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