



SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF REPRODUCTION

Newsletter

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From the President—

SSR: Change is in the wind

Before I start with this article, I would like to ask all of the SSR membership to remember, for a moment, our recently departed member, Matt Hardy. As all of you know, Matt passed away recently at an extremely premature age. Matt was an excellent scientist, an excellent SSR member, but most important of all, an excellent human being. Few who knew Matt can recall knowing a more gracious and charming individual. He was delightful to be around and was helpful to a fault. We all miss Matt a great deal and our Society has a large hole in the middle of our collective hearts because of his passing. We wish every conceivable condolence to Dianne Hardy on the loss of her husband and best friend.

Back to the Newsletter. First of all, I trust that all of you had a wonderful 2007 and are full of hope that 2008 will be even better. We all hope for better years ahead and in thinking about what 2008 will bring, I thought about what I would pen for the first issue of SSR Newsletter in 2008. I must tell you about the marvelous meeting that we will hold in May 2008 in Hawaii and briefly describe for you the extraordinary program that has been put together by John McCarrey and the entire Program Committee. I should also tell you about the transition we will be making in the Society's journal, *Biology of Reproduction*. I will, indeed, tell you about each of these events, but I will close with some thoughts

that have been in discussion for some time around the SSR Board of Directors meetings as well as in less formal scenarios whenever SSR members gather and talk. These items will require some serious thought and may further require some input on the part of the SSR membership to resolve in a manner that best benefits our Society and its members.

First, let me remind all of you, as if I had to, that the 2008 SSR Annual Meeting will be held in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort. The theme for the meeting will be, *Reproductive Biology—Basic Discoveries that Impact Our Lives*. This theme is meant to emphasize that while many of us focus our efforts on basic research, a large number of the discoveries that have emanated from such research have led to profound advances in the clinical, biomedical, industrial, and/or agricultural arenas. The Keynote Address will be presented by Dr. Rudolf Jaenisch from the Whitehead Institute, a world-renowned expert in stem cell biology and epigenetics. The President's Symposium will honor the research career of Dr. Ryuzo Yanagimachi, from the University of Hawaii, who will present an overview of his perspectives on how reproductive biology has progressed during his tenure in the field. He will then introduce two plenary talks on current topics related to his interests and presented by Dr. Richard Schultz from the University of

Pennsylvania and Dr. Takashi Shinohara from Kyoto University in Japan. In addition, there will be 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. One Exchange Lecture will be presented by the ASRM Distinguished Researcher for 2007, Dr. Robert Taylor from Emory University School of Medicine, and another by Dr. Alexandra Reis, the 2007 SRF New Investigator. The third Exchange Lecture will be presented by the SSR New Investigator Awardee for 2007, Humphrey H-C Yao. More details of the 2008 program can be found in the article by John McCarrey in this Newsletter. I strongly urge all of you to make your plans to attend this very special meeting.

Second, I would sincerely like to thank the current (until 2009) Editors-in-Chief of *BOR*, John Eppig and Mary Ann Handel, for their outstanding efforts and dedication on behalf of our journal and our Society. They have been tireless in their quest to make *BOR* a better journal and they have succeeded marvelously. We are all indebted to the long hours they have undertaken on our behalf and each of us should be most grateful for their role in making SSR a better society. With many thanks due to the hard work of Virendra Mahesh, Bob Burghardt, and the Publications Committee, we will begin the transition of the Editors-in-Chief tasks from the capable hands of John and Mary Ann to the equally capable team of Bernard Robaire and Bruce Murphy. I am very grateful to Bernard and Bruce for agreeing to accept the stewardship of *BOR* in 2009. This is no small task, but I am certain that they will be more than up to it as they lead *BOR* into the future. Please join me in thanking both the outgoing and incoming Editors-in-Chief for *BOR*, and I ask each of you for your complete support as they transition into the next phase.

The last thing that I would like to address is at least one of the Winds of Change that promises to swirl around our Society in the future. As I indicated in an earlier Newsletter article, the meeting in Hawaii represents an experiment of sorts. It was not without

considerable discussion, homework, and some trepidation that the Hawaii site was chosen. This choice represents a departure in the thinking, from even very recent years, by the Board of Directors and the Future Sites Committee. In the distant past, we congregated on university campuses, slept in non-air-conditioned dorms and showered in communal bathrooms. All of this was great fun, especially for those of us who can't remember things so well any more. Then, with the 1997 meeting we tried something new. We met at a resort/hotel complex in Portland, where we enjoyed bigger rooms, private baths, and even on-site restaurants for breakfast. I won't go into the details of having bars within short walking distance. I personally thought that, while different, this was not an unwelcome change. This theme has been revisited on many occasions since then with meetings in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Quebec City, Omaha, and San Antonio. All were excellent meetings and with each one we drifted further and further away from the campus concept. With that drift came the ever decreasing need for a Local Arrangements Committee that would previously do everything from making an application to hold the meeting at their specific site, spending hours drawing up signs, checking room sizes, and being sure that the carousels were appropriately manned by unsuspecting and unpaid graduate students. The need for more sophisticated audio-visual equipment, the ability to host large groups for social events without too much trouble, and just the realization that we really didn't want to rough it too much any more, prompted these earlier changes. Now, perhaps, is the appropriate time for the entire Society to begin to reflect on what the future might hold. It is clear that our meeting requests are coming not from SSR members anxious to show off their local university campuses, but from convention centers in larger cities. Indeed, the next three SSR Annual Meetings will be held in Convention Centers in Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and Portland. Under the watchful eye of Bob Koos and the Future Meeting Sites Committee, an excellent financial arrangement was procured to have our meetings in these sites in the 3 years following

the Hawaii meeting. With these sorts of changes, the local members' chores, if any, may be confined to being asked where to hold the opening reception, the barbeque, and the *other* Party. That being the case, should we think about going even one step further and asking whether we even need to have any local SSR people in place in order to hold the Annual Meeting in a specific venue. Should we begin to think about holding the SSR meetings in places such as San Diego, New Orleans, San Francisco, specific resort destinations such as those found in the Caribbean, etc.? Should we try to make a case to the membership that the meeting will cost more per year than has been our experience in the past? Surely in moving from the dorms to the hotel scene, all of our personal costs went up significantly. Would we absorb similar increases in the future with smiles on our faces? What will this mean to the trainees? Will they decide to buy fewer pitchers of beer during the year and save some of their own money to add to their mentors' generosity to attend the Annual Meeting if it were in an exotic but more expensive location, or will they feel that the Society is not sensitive to their needs or their pocketbooks? The answers to these questions would certainly be of help to the Future Sites Committee and the Board of Directors as they determine where the Annual Meeting will be held.

I do not pretend to have the answers to all of these questions, but I have been involved in enough formal and informal discussions on this topic to know that it deserves some serious discussion. Hawaii is an experiment, and perhaps before writing the Discussion and Conclusion sections for this experiment we should wait to see what the Results are. In any case, if you have strong, or even not so strong, opinions on the direction that our Society should be taking in planning for the Annual Meeting, you should make these opinions known to the members of your Board of Directors. After all, it is your Society. ■

—Doug Stocco

SSR awards for 2008

- ◆ *Carl G. Hartman Award*—**S. K. Dey**, Vanderbilt University
- ◆ *SSR Research Award* (supported by NV Organon)—**Randy Prather**, University of Missouri
- ◆ *Distinguished Service Award* (supported by the EMD Serono, Inc.)—**Joanne Fortune**, Cornell University
- ◆ *New Investigator Award* (sponsored by the Virendra B. Mahesh SSR New Investigator Fund)—**Humphrey H-C Yao**, University of Illinois
- ◆ *Trainee Mentoring Award*—**Michael F. Smith**, University of Missouri

These awards will be presented during SSR's Annual Meeting in Hawaii. A description of the awards is at www.ssr.org/Awards.html. ■

Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee is seeking new members

SSR's 41st Annual Meeting is rapidly approaching and I know that we are all looking forward to enjoying a fantastic meeting in a truly spectacular setting. A special emphasis of this year's meeting is being placed on the trainees, as we will be given an unprecedented opportunity to participate in several components of the meeting. We are seeking members to become a part of the inaugural Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee. If you are planning on attending the meeting this year, I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to participate in its facilitation. It's never too early to start planning, or too late to get involved! If you have any interest, questions, or comments, please email me at kdunlap@cvm.tamu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in Hawaii! ■

—Kathrin Dunlap, Chair
Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee

Exciting program planned for Annual Meeting in Hawaii

An outstanding scientific program has been planned for SSR's 2008 Annual Meeting May 27–30 in Kona, Hawaii. The theme for the meeting is *Reproductive Biology—Basic Discoveries that Impact Our Lives*.

The **Keynote Address** will be delivered by Dr. Rudolf Jaenisch of the Whitehead Institute; he will discuss “Stem cells, pluripotency and nuclear reprogramming.”

The **President's Symposium** will recognize the research career of Dr. Ryuzo Yanagimachi of the University of Hawaii. Dr. Yanagimachi will talk about “Germ cell research: My path and future prospectives.” Dr. Takashi Shinohara, Kyoto University, will examine “Germline modification in spermatogonial stem cells,” and Dr. Richard Schultz, University of Pennsylvania, will discuss “From egg to embryo: A peripartetic journey.”

State-of-the-Art-Lectures will be given by Dr. Kevin Eggan, Harvard University (“Nuclear reprogramming, embryonic stem cells and their use in the study and treatment of human disease”) and Dr. Janet Rossant, Hospital for Sick Children, Canada (“Stem cells and the early mouse embryo”).

Concurrent **Exchange Lectures** will be given by three scientists honored by their respective societies. Dr. Robert Taylor, Emory University School of Medicine and ASRM Distinguished Researcher, will explore “Human placental angiogenesis and its implications in disorders of pregnancy.” Dr. Alexandra Reis, Newcastle University and SRF New Investigator, will discuss “APC activity during meiosis,” while Humphrey Hung-Chang Yao, University of Illinois and SSR New Investigator, will reflect on “To be or not to be: Cell fate determination in fetal testes.”

The 2008 Program Committee has selected 15 **Minisymposia** to be presented in Kona. They include “A new frontier in ovarian cellular physiology: Ion channels of endocrine ovarian

cells and their regulators,” “Cell fate decisions in the early mammalian embryo: Random or biased?” “Spermatogonial renewal and differentiation: Comparative aspects,” “Monitoring cell-cell conversations in the epididymis,” “Novel contraceptives for the 21st century,” “When does implantation begin?” “DNA damage in sperm and effects on offspring,” “Role of PTGS2 (COX 2) and arachidonic acid/prostaglandins in the testis,” “Noncoding RNAs and reproduction,” “Epigenetic reprogramming of the embryo,” “Lymphocyte-promoted endometrial angiogenesis and its relation to pregnancy success,” “Factors affecting oocyte quality: A large animal model,” “Effects and mechanisms of action of environmental endocrine disruptors on reproduction,” “Novel insights into gonadotropin regulation,” “Transcription factors/cell-signaling essential to maintain the niche in the mammalian testis.”

In addition, 24 **platform sessions**, and five **poster sessions** will be featured.

A complete schedule for the scientific program and for other meeting activities can be found at www.ssr.org/08Schedule.shtml.

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

—John McCarrey, Chair
2008 Program Committee

FASEB launches presidential campaign initiative: ScienceCures

In anticipation of the 2008 presidential election, FASEB has launched a voter education initiative, aimed at raising the profile of federal funding for biomedical research among the candidates and the general public. According to FASEB President Robert Palazzo, “The presidential election represents an opportunity to bring the critical importance of medical research to the national stage. We want to give scientists the tools they need to raise awareness about the role of NIH in developing the treatments and cures that positively affect our quality of life.” The new initiative, called ScienceCures, may be viewed at www.sciencecures.org

The recent standoff between congress and the president over appropriations for science agencies, including NIH and NSF, has emphasized the integral role of the Administration in securing science funding. Moreover, given that health care remains a central issue in the ongoing presidential race, FASEB is working to ensure that NIH and biomedical research are part of that discussion. Over the course of the next year, ScienceCures will give scientists the opportunity to express their support for medical research in the context of the election while educating voters about the connection between today’s science and tomorrow’s medical advances.

As a first step in this exciting new project, FASEB launched several videos on YouTube (youtube.com/sciencecures), featuring biologist and FASEB society member Sally Moody of the George Washington University Medical Center, asking the presidential candidates to support biomedical research. “Medical research and improved health are top priorities for the American people,” said Palazzo. “Our elected leaders should recognize that NIH and the hope it provides to millions of patients is both a national treasure and a national priority.” In the first week alone, more than six hundred visitors viewed the FASEB videos, which were submitted for consideration in presidential debates. FASEB

encourages all of its societies’ members to view and comment on the videos, or to submit video content of their own.

ScienceCures allows scientists to become engaged in calling on our leaders to reinvigorate national investment in scientific research through a variety of tools and resources. Through the Web site, researchers and members of the public can contact the candidates, write letters to their local media outlets, sign a pledge to vote for candidates who support federal funding of research, and even register to vote. The site includes a number of resources emphasizing the benefits of biomedical research, including a number of interactive features designed to provide key facts about medical research, at both the national and local level. There will also be the opportunity for scientists to sign up for FASEB’s e-Action list, which will allow them to stay abreast of the most recent developments in the presidential initiative, legislative news relevant to biomedical researchers, and to receive action alerts on breaking legislative issues.

In addition to mobilizing the scientific community through the ScienceCures Web site, FASEB is working to highlight the importance of medical research among all presidential candidates. This includes providing all candidates and their campaigns with information about the role NIH and biomedical research play in improving the health of the nation, engaging moderators and sponsors of presidential debates, and alerting the media to critical national issues related to medical research. “From the aging population to emerging diseases to drug-resistant ‘superbugs,’ there has never been a more important time to prioritize biomedical research,” stated Palazzo in a recent press release. “FASEB hopes that anyone running for president of the United States would make NIH a key part of their healthcare platform.” ■

—Carrie D. Wolinetz, Ph.D.
FASEB Office of Public Affairs

The dreaded “d” word

In our Editor’s column for this issue of the Newsletter, we would like to discuss an issue that many *BOR* authors, reviewers, and editors have asked about: the dreaded “d” word (“descriptive”). This word is anathema in review of a manuscript or a grant proposal, where reviewers are seeking to evaluate the potential value of research findings. It is a word frequently used imprecisely by reviewers to judge a paper (or grant proposal) that may have no apparent scientific flaws, but leaves the reviewer with the impression that not much has been learned. Because the use of this word can be career-altering at worst and disappointing at the least, it is worthwhile to explore what it means, how it is used, and how it might be replaced by more precise language.

The dictionary (Merriam-Webster Online) definitions of “descriptive” are: “serving to describe,” which is definitely not very helpful, and “referring to, constituting or grounded in matters of observation or experience,” which is considerably more helpful, as it suggests a scientific process. “Descriptive” papers do, in fact, make significant advances when they provide clear underpinning for exciting future studies. Indeed, because knowledge of the characteristics of an experimental system provides the basis for experiments designed to reveal mechanisms of function, we can all agree that such characteristics must be “described” as an essential foundation to experimental analyses. Thus, a “description” of the developmental and cell-specific pattern of testicular expression of the newly discovered Wacko (*Wak*) gene in mouse testes informs us how to approach a problem or ask a better question. This gets to the issue of how the “d” word is used. Certainly this is muddled by the fact that not all reviewers use the word in the same way and with the same

perspective, but generally reviewers use “descriptive” as a catchall term for work not providing a mechanistic or functional understanding of a biological process. Reviewers for *BOR* (and for other venues) are looking for enhanced understanding of processes of reproduction, pathways from one point to another. A brief “description” of the pattern of expression of *Wak* may not provide this insight. However, analyses conducted in the context of developmental control or experimental manipulations (hormonal or genetic) to test hypotheses of regulation could clearly enhance our understanding of a pathway. Description of *Wak* expression in another species might provide no new insight, or alternatively, if thoughtfully addressed, might inform about various strategies that have evolved to allow many species to reach the same end point of successful propagation. Further, while a description of *Wak* mRNA expression might not generate much reviewer enthusiasm, studies on how *Wak* mRNA and WAK protein are regulated, developmentally, hormonally, or genetically, would certainly be appreciated, and even more so would be experimental perturbations that reveal WAK function in testis development. In fact, reviewers for *BOR* are specifically asked to judge whether a paper presents an advance to the subject field—and certainly it is fair to say that this is also a driving issue in grant reviews. Clearly, “descriptive” papers that lay the foundation for future research, ones that will be cited in the future for this reason, should not be dismissed, and, in fact, reviewers for *BOR* are asked for advice on the potential of “descriptive” studies in establishing the groundwork for significant advances in future “mechanistic” studies.

Ideally, both authors and editors should replace the “d” word with more sharply defined

language. They must overtly clarify the value and contribution of manuscripts (and grant proposals). The essence of doing good science and of good reviewing is to identify the key questions (and missing information) that will reveal the workings of a process. Therefore, as reviewers, when tempted to use the “d” word, we should pause and ask ourselves what we have—or have not—learned from the results being reported. And, as scientists and authors, we must be precise and explicit about what is needed to get us to the end point of new insights into a biological process, for it is these insights that provide the significance and scientific impact that is desired for papers published in *BOR* (or for successful grant proposals).

The value of “description” is that it is a necessary prelude to the analysis of regulation and function, and can sometimes reveal a remarkable and totally unanticipated phenomenon. But to truly excite and engage our readers, we must go beyond “description” and provide data that help us to understand a process or a mechanism. Therefore, in the practical sense of writing for and reviewing for *BOR*, is there a rule of thumb that can be used in deciding whether a paper is suitable? We suggest that both authors and reviewers should apply the “why” and “so what?” tests. Reviewers are naturally inclined to ask themselves whether they are interested, or really care, about the answers to the “why?” and “so what?” questions. If the answers are not compelling, the paper or grant application is not yet fine wine! *BOR* has published and will continue to publish outstanding vintages! ■

—John Eppig and Mary Ann Handel
Editors-in-Chief, *Biology of Reproduction*
(with insightful input from the Associate Editors)

Emeritus Committee to honor Gil Greenwald

The Emeritus Committee will again host the Emeritus/Senior Breakfast at the Annual Meeting in Hawaii. The breakfast, to be held on Wednesday, May 28, will feature a tribute to Dr. Gil Greenwald, past president and former editor-in-chief of *Biology of Reproduction*. Dr. Greenwald was widely recognized for his pioneering research on follicular development and luteal function in laboratory animals. A biography featuring the contributions of Dr. Greenwald to the field of reproductive biology will be presented by Dr. Reid Norman, who earned his doctorate with Dr. Greenwald.

The Emeritus Committee has decided to open the breakfast to all members and trainees who wish to attend. Trainees are especially encouraged to attend to learn of the contributions of pioneers such as Dr. Greenwald. All who are interested in attending can sign up through the meeting registration form.

The biographical sketches of previous honorees, Drs. Andrew Nalbandov and Robert Melampy, are now available on the SSR Web site. These excellent biographical sketches provide unique insight into the philosophies and character of these pioneer scientists. ■

—Fredrick Stormshak, Chair
Emeritus Committee

New policy on public access mandated by congress

In the Consolidated Appropriations Bill of 2007, which includes funding for NIH and was signed into law by President Bush on December 26, 2007, there is a new directive on “public access” to scientific publications supported by grants from NIH. The language in the new act is as follows:

Sec.218. The Director of the National Institutes of Health shall require that all investigators funded by the NIH submit or have submitted for them to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication: Provided, That the NIH shall implement the public access policy in a manner consistent with copyright law.

Dr. Martin Frank, executive director of the American Physiological Society, who has led the fight on behalf of the publications of the nonprofit scientific societies, makes the following observations:

“Even though members of the publishing community tried to influence the legislation and get it struck from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2007, we failed. The provision in the Consolidated Appropriations Act directs the NIH to change its existing Public Access Policy, implemented as a voluntary measure in May 2005, so that participation is required for agency-funded investigators. Researchers will now be required to deposit electronic copies of their peer-reviewed manuscripts into the National Library of Medicine's online archive, PubMed Central. Full texts of the articles will be publicly available and searchable online in PubMed Central no later than 12 months after publication in a journal. The potential impact on journals will vary depending on the percentage of NIH funded content in the journal and the timeliness of the field. However, the Federal mandate for public

access will be a clarion call for OA advocates who want other Federal agencies to follow suit. We can anticipate renewed efforts to encourage Senator Cornyn to get a co-sponsor for FRPAA, which mandated deposit for 11 Federal agencies, and introduce it in 2008. It is also likely that there will be efforts in the future to reduce the embargo periods from 12 months to 6 months to make them conform to the Wellcome Trust and HHMI policies. As you might be aware, Robert Kiley, head of Wellcome Trust, is the chair of the PubMed Central Advisory Committee which will make a move to 6 months more likely in the future.”

Since PubMed Central will publish the article in PubMed with a reference to the original publication but without linking it to the journal site, it is anticipated that the number of visits to the journal sites will decrease and this may further reduce the falling number of subscriptions. In view of these changes, the current business model of *Biology of Reproduction* is under review. ■

—Virendra Mahesh and Bob Burghardt, Co-chairs
Publications Committee

Trainee Affairs Committee prepares for Annual Meeting

It's that time of the year again: the time to get geared for the next SSR meeting! As all of you know, the 2008 meeting will be held in beautiful Hawaii. To celebrate this occasion, the Trainee Affairs Committee has been working hard to offer you great networking and career development opportunities.

First, in collaboration with FASEB, we have developed a new service reserved for our Trainee members. During the entire meeting, a human resource consultant will be available, and trainees will be able to book a one-on-one time slot with the consultant to review their CVs and obtain suggestions regarding the format and how to customize them for the career path they are interested in (academia vs. non-academic). We are defining the technical aspect of this service, so stay tuned for e-mails coming your way with more details. Most important, don't forget to bring your CVs to the meeting!

Another important part of our effort goes into organizing the Trainee Mentor Luncheon, at which you'll be able to spend time in small groups with your favorite scientist attending the meeting. This year we will provide brown bag lunches and allow trainees and mentors to go anywhere on the resort in small groups (we are anticipating 3-4 trainees with each mentor). This way the participants can develop this networking moment at their own pace, in a more relaxed and personal setting.

How many times have you been facing notebooks full of data, or trying to put together the best manuscript possible, only to feel confused as to where to start? And how would you pick the ideal journal to submit your hard work, or respond to critiques by reviewers and editors? If you have found yourself in this situation at least once, make sure you don't miss this year's Trainee Forum! The two editors-in-chief of *Biology of Reproduction*, Drs. John Eppig and Mary Ann Handel, will discuss with us the ins and outs of the publication process, so come and hear it from the horse's mouth!

As our committee does every year, we'll be offering a roommate referral service for trainees planning to attend the meeting and looking for some cost-effective solutions. The Trainee Placement Service will also be offered as usual. Check the SSR Web site for Placement Service forms.

Another activity that all Trainees are invited to attend is the Emeritus/Senior Breakfast, which commemorates the contributions and achievements of one of the early scientists in the field of reproductive biology. This year we will be honoring Dr. Gil Greenwald, Past-President of SSR and editor of *BOR*. This is a great occasion to learn about the pioneering studies carried out by Dr. Greenwald. The Emeritus Committee has extended an invitation to all trainees. If you wish to take part in this initiative, make sure you select it on the registration form.

As a last note, I would like to highlight the great effort of our committee in general and of Rebecca Bott in particular for bringing the Mentor Award to life. From this year on, this award will become an official SSR award to recognize the efforts and support of a mentor in shaping and nurturing our careers. The mentor will be recognized publicly at an award presentation ceremony during the Annual Meeting. Thank you all for the hard work! Don't forget to nominate your mentor for the award in the future. ■

—*Rita Vassena, Senior Trainee Representative
Trainee Affairs Committee*

New members

Regular

Laurence R. Brewer
Martine Culty
Ann M. Dorward
Colette Galet
Renshan Ge
Shoichi Iseki
Rosemary Knapp
Chang-Kyu Lee
Kei-ichiro Maeda
Smita D. Mahale
Costadinos Mylonas
Ewa Rajpert-DeMeyts
Carmen Sapienza
Kevin Sarge
Danny J. Schust
Justin St. John
Duan-Cheng Wen
Huirong Xie
Manabu Yoshida

Associate

Maria Paz Vilar Egea

Trainee

Firas K. Albuz
Tal Almog
Shahin Assefnia
Anat Bahat
Santwona Baidya
Daniel W. Bailey
Andrew N. Bertolini
Ramji K. Bhandari
Claire L. Borg
Donovan Chan
Ya-Ting Chang
Andrew J. Childs
Man Kin Chung
Jiannan Cui
Melissa A. Cooney
Juanmahel Davila

Edgar S. Diaz-Cruz
Heng-Yu Fan
Anders Friberg
Gagandeep K. Gahlay
Jennifer A. Hernandez
Gifford
Lisanne Grenier
Whitfield B. Growdon
Natalie J. Hannan
Trine Haugen
Cathryn A. Hogarth
Wei Hu
Junjiu Huang
Chun-Yi Jen
Yui Kaneko
Chul Kim
Noriko Kobayashi
Abasali Kokab
Raymond M. Krawzak
Adam J. Kuhl
Kashmira Kulkarni-
Datar
Romain Lambrot
Sandy Lenie
Chong Li
Zhilin Liu
Lacey J. Luense
Pengpeng Ma
Kirsten McTavish
Pavni Mehrotra
Ellen M. Menkhorst
Andrew S. Midzak
Anne Miermont
Kei Miyamoto
Amy N. Nash
Magdalena Nutu
Fanny Odet
Tetsuo Ono
Hsiang-Yin Pao
Kathleen A. Pennington
Stephanie K. Petrillo

Jenny G. Powers
Jonathan M. Riel
Monika Sachdev
Amanda K. Schiefelbein
Karen A. Schindler
Liz Simon
Racheal G. Slattery
Emily Y. Smith
Nicole E. Solinger
Kathryn Solka
Julian Sosnik
Erin Stanley
Julie A.W. Stille
Kimberley Tam
Kellie L.K. Tamashiro
Mirjan J.G. Thys
Tomoyuki Tsukiyama
Nahid Turan
Ramya Udayashankar
Sander van den Driesche
Laura Venuto
Lenka A. Vodstrel
Angela Wagner
Sarah L. Wakefield
Ning Wang
Gustavo O. Zamberlam

Affiliate

Muren Herrid

Change of status

To Regular:
Donner F. Babcock
Indrani C. Bagchi
Melanie Clemmer
Jens Ehmcke
Andrew J. French
Wei Ge
Koichiro Gen

David J. Handelsman
Leslie L. Heckert
Toshitaka Horiuchi
JoGayle Howard
Junya Ito
Kula Nand Jha
Mary Lynn Johnson
Michael T. Kaproth
William H. Kinsey
Satoshi Kishigami
Gary R. Klinefelter
Fernanda C. Landim-
Alvarenga
Karen Moore
Yoshitaka Nagahama
Jon M. Oatley
Stephanie A. Pangas
Marie Pantaleon
Hanne G. Pedersen
P Prabhakara Reddi
Rocio M. Rivera
Zvi-Shalom Roth
Becky L. Sartini
Khampoune Sayasith
Toshihiro Shioda
Barbara Sotolongo
Paula Stein
Xuan Zhang

To Associate:
Sally Boutelle
Tien-Cheng Chang
Shannon M. Fernandez
Scott Lankford
Katherine Lily Wu
Xiaoqin Ye

To Trainee:
Mika Katayama

Where is the next generation of SSR members?

Chapter Two

This past year, thanks to the work of our fine Business Office, we were able to renew our membership online. This process made renewing easy to do in a timely manner.

Our membership numbers, as of January 9, 2008, are increased by 12% compared to a year ago. Our total current membership is 1,730. **The exciting news about the membership numbers is that all levels of membership are increased with the exception of the associate level.**

Compared to member numbers on January 7, 2007, the current numbers are 1,214 (+14%) for regular members, 250 (+3 %) for trainee members, 109 (+11%) for emeriti members, and 157 (-35%) for associate members. I am confident that our membership will increase by July and will surpass the total membership of 2,263 as of July 7, 2007.

However, there are two concerns. **First, the goal of the Membership Committee is to get all members to renew on a calendar-year schedule, i.e., January 1–December 31.** Even though the reminder to renew was sent out electronically last October and November, many of our members have still not renewed.

The second concern is the trainee membership. In the October 2007 SSR Newsletter, I asked, Where is the next generation of SSR members? In this article, I reminded the mentors/advisors of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows that it was their responsibility to educate their trainees about the value of membership in a scientific society, e.g., SSR. If you are a mentor, did you get the job done? Are your trainees members of SSR?

Last fall, I sent a questionnaire to 250 SSR trainees. The response, as surveys go, was good, with about 50 trainees responding. Four questions were asked: (1) What was the primary reason for joining SSR? (2) What is the value of belonging to a scientific society such as SSR? (3) What can scientific societies do to advance your scientific

career? and (4) What can trainees give to SSR to increase its membership, its attractiveness to potential members, and its relevancy as a scientific society? Based on the responses, the primary reason for the trainees to join SSR is to attend the Annual Meeting, followed having a place where trainees can share their research with others and learn about new discoveries in reproductive biology. In response to question 2, the value of belonging to a scientific society is the opportunity to interact with people who share common interests and to meet the experts in the field—generally referred to as “networking.” In response to the third question, what can SSR do to advance the career of trainees, the overwhelming consensus was networking and collaboration. Of second importance was for SSR to provide a place for trainees to present their research and also learn about job opportunities. Finally in response to question 4, trainees responded that they can give to SSR by inviting others to become members and serve on committees. To get the full story, see “Bahr, J.M. Are Scientific Societies Serving the Needs of Graduate and Postdoctoral Students, *Reprod. Fert. and Dev.* 2008, 20:19-22.

So what is the bottom line, as they say?

Trainees see a real need for the existence of scientific societies such as SSR. However, the strength and vitality of SSR and the services it provides now and in the future depend upon active members who attend the Annual Meeting, publish their best research in *Biology of Reproduction*, serve on committees, etc. Therefore it is critical for trainees to become members NOW. When these trainees acquire a permanent position in the future, they will make the transition from a trainee member to a regular member and then recruit their own trainees to join SSR. Trainee membership is the future of the next SSR generation. ■

—Janice M. Bahr, Chair
Membership Committee

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2009 Annual Meeting—preliminary announcement

SSR's 42nd Annual Meeting in 2009 will be held in the city that is home to the largest inland port in the United States—Pittsburgh. The meeting dates are July 18–22, 2009, so please mark your calendars. The programmatic theme of the meeting is Science for the Public Good. Dr. Pat Hunt will serve as Program Committee chair for the meeting, and she and incoming SSR President Asgi Fazleabas have recruited a terrific cast of characters to

serve on the Program Committee. A formal invitation to submit ideas for minisymposia will be posted after the meeting in Hawaii in May. In the interim, if you have terrific ideas for plenary and State-of-the-Art lectures or minisymposia topics that just cannot wait, please send them to Pat Hunt (pathunt@wsu.edu). ■

—Pat Hunt, Chair
2009 Program Committee

Message from the Treasurer

SSR's fiscal year ended with a positive, if narrow, balance of the \$2 million budget for 2007. The Annual Meeting resulted in a minor loss, as a consequence of increased expenses for food and services at the host hotel. Income from *Biology of Reproduction* has increased in both 2006 and 2007 due to a number of factors, including a substantial savings from reduction in costs. The income and expense of the membership component of the budget (everything but the journal and the Annual Meeting) have remained stable. The SSR investment portfolio advanced substantially over the first 10 months, with double-digit unrealized gains by November, but the winds of December chilled the North American markets, reducing that gain by half by the end of the year. Although we have not yet achieved our goal of holding two-fold the annual budget in investments, our short-term fiscal health is good.

One of the tasks completed last year was the modernization and simplification of the SSR Investment Policy. The earlier document originated in 1994 and was last revised more than 10 years ago. The new version reflects the current distribution of funds, the suggestions of the auditor, and current market conditions. I thank ad hoc committee members Landis Keyes, Sally Perreault, Geula Gibori, and Harold Spies, who generously gave of their time to undertake this revision.

In 2005, the SSR Board voted to hold the 2008 Annual Meeting in Hawaii in conjunction

with the World Congress on Reproductive Biology. As explained by our President, Doug Stocco, this break from tradition was to be an experiment. The venue, while attractive and exciting, has restrictions with space, particularly for the poster sessions, and the facilities are more costly. At the November Board Meeting, an agonizing discussion was held to determine how to address the issues of space and cost to best serve the interests of the Society and the membership. In the end, the Board accepted a proposal to limit attendance to 850. As attendance in recent history has ranged from 900 to 1,200, this will not be a major limitation. We also were compelled to establish the registration fee at a higher level than in previous years. Even with these measures in place, we expect that the Annual Meeting will lose money in 2008, and it is my hope that the other components of the budget will contribute to result in a positive bottom line. The Annual Meetings for the next three years will be more predictable and less expensive, and we will return to our tradition of robust attendance and fiscal health for this event.

We expect to fill our quota of 850 for the Annual Meeting, so you are encouraged to register as soon as possible and to reserve your accommodations. I am certain it will be an enjoyable and memorable meeting and I hope to see you there. ■

—Bruce Murphy

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