FROM THE PRESIDENT

Global Challenges—and Successes

What a great honor to be the first person outside North America to be your President! Over 30% of SSR’s members are “international”; nevertheless, it’s important to remember that SSR was founded in North America and that a majority of its 1,800 members are from the USA. Importantly, almost one-third of those members are Trainees. We can be very proud of our Trainee membership, which mirrors what the Society does to recognise, assist, mentor, and promote Trainees. No other Society, to my knowledge, has the same commitment to Trainee Members wherever they are in the world.

SSR has experienced a tough time over the past few years. Membership was falling, attendance at the Annual Meetings was in jeopardy, the financial health of the Society took a hit after the global financial crisis, and the Journal (Biology of Reproduction) had to meet the open-access challenge whilst maintaining its quality and quantity. All of these issues affected the financial bottom line as well as the [*raison d’être*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raison_d%27%C3%AAtre) of the Society. The Board conducted a Strategy Session at its 2012 Winter Meeting in Houston which resulted in several new initiatives that are now bearing fruit. These include a concerted membership drive, a change in the investment policy of the Society, a change in the format of the Annual Meeting, and a policy of the Editors of the Journal to engage the authors and reviewers to publish the best papers as rapidly as possible.

The recent Annual Meeting in Montreal demonstrated that these initiatives are effective. Attendance was over 1,200, with a record number of Abstracts. Feedback about the Meeting format and content has been very positive, membership numbers have begun to increase again, and BOR continues to be among the top reproduction journals internationally, with a very short turnaround time for submitted manuscripts. Furthermore, SSR continues to focus on and attract Trainees to its membership and its Annual Meeting in significant numbers. Our investments have not only stabilised, but are growing again, leading to a re-evaluation of the use of the Society’s Endowment Funds. More details of our finances are given by Treasurer Sally Darney in her report in this Newsletter.

At a time of declining research funds and more difficult career opportunities in reproductive biology research internationally, SSR has to become THE Society to join as members for those interested in the reproductive sciences, and the Annual Meeting has to be THE meeting to attend in preference to others. SSR has a particular emphasis on Trainees and International Members by encouraging their active participation in the Annual Meeting and the affairs of the Society. SSR also has to raise its relevance publicly as the go-to place for accurate information about all aspects of reproductive biology, fertility, and infertility. SSR continues to grow and meet those challenges; here are some highlights of what we are doing.
1. Membership

Under the leadership of Jon Oatley and Wilma de Kempinas, the Membership Committee continues its drive to attract new and retain existing members through personal contacts at a regional and local level, and by offering attractive rates and discounts, especially to Trainees. For example, the Board recently agreed to offer Trainees transitioning to Regular Members two years’ membership for the price of one year.

SSR Committees are made up of approximately 120 Members, of whom 30% are “international”; each year, one-third of members retire from Committees, thereby giving many other members an opportunity to participate in the affairs of the Society, especially those outside North America. I am most grateful to those Members who agreed to serve on Committees.

2. Meetings

The format of the Annual Meeting changed in Penn State (2012). To generalise, plenary lectures and posters were scheduled in the mornings, while modules designed to facilitate greater in-depth discussion of particular topics were scheduled in the afternoons. This format was repeated in Montreal (2013) together with more emphasis on platform sessions. Feedback from attendees on this format has been very positive, and it will be repeated in Grand Rapids.

The Montreal meeting was a huge success, not the least because of the quality of the speakers and the science. The leadership of Past President Susan Suarez; the Co-Chairs of the Program Committee, Janice Evans and Janice Bailey, affectionately known as “The Janii”; and their teams on the Program Committee and Modules deserve our thanks; as does the Local Arrangements Committee, led by Bruce Murphy and Hugh Clarke. And let’s not forget the Trainees, the Development Committee, and the Business Office staff who make it all tick. A particular highlight at Montreal was the availability of the Abstracts electronically, which proved to be a great success—thanks to Mel and her team.

The theme of the Grand Rapids meeting will be “Fertility: A Global Challenge.” This reflects the need for SSR to embrace research topics that will include the effects of modern society on preservation and limitation of fertility in humans, wildlife, feral species, and farm and companion animals. The modules under consideration will have a functional focus: Male and Female Fertility and Infertility, Translation of Basic Research to Real-World Practice (wildlife, farm and domestic animals, and humans), Interrelationships of Reproduction and the Environment, as well as Pregnancy/Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DoHaD). The Ovarian Workshop will be joining as a module in 2014. The plenary speakers are already in place, and the Program Committee, under the leadership of Lois Salamonsen and Jon Hennebold, is formulating the program.

It is anticipated that the deadline for Abstracts will be 15 February 2014. The Board has agreed to lift the restriction that all Abstracts “...must contain some new data and not been presented elsewhere...” in order to attract more Abstracts and hence more registrants to the meeting. However, it is still expected that authors will, whenever possible, include new data. A consequence of this decision, coupled with the decision to make Abstracts available only electronically at the Annual Meeting as was done in Montreal, is that Abstracts will no longer be published as a Supplement of Biology of Reproduction. They will be in the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Society, and can be cited as a communication or presentation, but not a publication.
3. Manuscripts

Our Journal, Biology of Reproduction, goes from strength to strength. The viability of BOR is very important for the future of SSR because income from the journal is a major part of the Operations Budget and supports many of the activities of the Society. BOR ranks in the top journals in our field, has the highest 10-year citation rate of all reproduction journals, has a very short manuscript turnaround time of 21 days, and is a very author-friendly journal! These achievements, resulting from the policy of publishing the best science, are due to the immediate past Editors-in-Chief, Bruce Murphy and Bernard Robaire. They also introduced an innovative addition to BOR called the World of Reproductive Biology (WoRB). In the company of many other Societies and journals, SSR signed the Declaration of Research Achievements (DORA), which rejects the use of journal impact factors as a means of assessing research projects or personal achievements, promotions, or employment, and places emphasis on citations and other outcomes.

We welcome the new Editors-in-Chief of Biology of Reproduction, Tom Spencer and Franco DeMayo, and their team of Associate Editors, who started in July 2013, and we wish them every success.

4. Marketing

It is my opinion that SSR can do a lot more to promote our science to our peers and to the public, and that includes those who hand out the research funds not only in North America but also internationally. We can make SSR the go-to place for public information about matters related to fertility, infertility, and reproductive biology by expanding our outreach programs and being prepared to provide factual information on topics that we know something about. This can be achieved in several ways.

- SSR will launch a new website before the end of 2013 that will facilitate our communication and outreach to the public.
- I have asked all the SSR committees to think of ways in which they can work with each other to provide more efficient and comprehensive ways of promoting SSR (for example, the Public Affairs Committee is working with the Publications Committee and the Animal Ethics Subcommittee on a project that will highlight the importance of our research).
- We will continue to put SSR’s name on public matters which we think are important for the future of the planet that are within our scientific expertise (like DORA).

5. World Congress of Reproductive Biology (WCRB)

The next WCRB will be held in Edinburgh, UK, 2–4 September 2014, right after the Annual Meeting of the Society for Reproduction and Fertility (SRF). SSR is a partner in WCRB 2014, as we were in Cairns and Hawaii. We will be represented by Dr. Martin Matzuk as one of the Plenary Speakers, together with a slate of Symposia speakers. The call for abstracts will be made next year, and there will be reduced registration fees for Trainees. Mark it in your diary and plan to include the Edinburgh Festival during your visit! More details can be found on the WCRB website: www.wcrb2014.org.

6. A Final Note

SSR is a great society to be part of, but its success relies on the individual efforts and participation of many people in the Business Office, the Board, its Committees, the Trainees, and the Members. It is an honor and a pleasure to acknowledge the great work done by all these people. Personally, I am indebted to all the Board Members, Committee Chairs and Members, and Judy Jansen, the Executive Director, for their support and patience. Much of what I will do as your President has its origins in the actions of my predecessors, Sally Darney, Barb Vanderhyden, and Susan Suarez, to whom I am most grateful.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Grand Rapids. It will be a great meeting! Cheers from down under....

—Jock Findlay, President
e-mail: jock.findlay@princehenrys.org
The SSR Needs You!

As a child, I lived very near a US post office and distinctly remember the poster at the building’s entrance of Uncle Sam pointing his finger and saying, “I want you for the U.S. Army.” And no matter at what angle you viewed the poster, he was looking directly into your eyes.

Well, I am looking directly into your eyes to convey the same message, namely, that your Society needs you. Your Society operates as a transparent democracy, and the strength of that democracy, i.e., your Society, is directly linked to the participation of its citizenry, i.e., you. As Vice-President of SSR, one of my responsibilities is to populate the committees that are central to the successful operation of SSR. Committee service offers you a unique opportunity to gain further insight into how SSR works, with membership terms beginning at the 2014 SSR Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI.

I encourage you to learn more about the different committees by visiting SSR’s Committees page, where you will find a list of standing and ad hoc committees, as well as links to information about the chairs and 2013–2014 committee members. Each committee page has information about its activities/responsibilities, usually listed as a link to the standard operating procedures (SOP) of the committee. Our Bylaws dictate that at least one-third, but not more than two-thirds, of the members of each standing committee shall be replaced each year, which means a plethora of opportunities await for you to join committees, serve your Society, and learn from those members who are continuing their service from previous years.

Your Society is becoming increasingly more international and continues to maintain its focus on trainee members. Therefore, I encourage participation of these constituencies that are so critical to SSR. Our world is shrinking thanks to e-mail, Skype, conference calls, etc., making it easy for members anywhere in the world to participate in committee activities. I urge you to seriously consider serving your Society.

So if you are interested in serving, please e-mail me by 8 November 2013 with your primary and secondary choices. It would also help if you would include a sentence or two about why you would like to join the committee and what experience (in or out of SSR) you have to contribute to the committee. Trainees are encouraged to participate in the activities of the Trainee Affairs Committee, and note that some members of this committee serve as trainee representatives to other SSR committees.

I look forward to receiving your e-mail.

—Richard Schultz, Vice President
e-mail: rschultz@sas.upenn.edu
New Guidelines Have Been Added for Trainee Award Eligibility

Trainee Research Awards have been an important feature of the SSR Annual Meeting since 1977. These awards recognize the major contribution of a trainee to the design and implementation of experiments, analysis of the data, interpretation of the results, and writing of the abstract.

This year, at the time of abstract submission, trainees and their mentors will be required to verify that the trainee meets these criteria in order to be considered for a research award.

Please remember to check this new statement as you consider your eligibility for a SSR 2014 Trainee Research Award.

Time to Nominate Your Colleagues for SSR 2014 Major Awards!

The Society sponsors five major awards that recognize outstanding contributions to the science of reproductive biology. The Awards Committee encourages SSR members to exercise the privilege of membership by nominating individuals for these awards. The five major awards presented annually are listed at left.

Guidelines for nominating candidates for awards, the award criteria, and the list of past recipients are available on the SSR website (www.ssr.org/Awards.shtml).

Awards Committee members for 2013–2014 include: Jennifer Wood (Chair), Sakhila Banu, Derek Boerboom, Mark Crowe, Diane Duffy, Tom Fleming, Geoff Hammond, Ken McNatty, Laurie Jaeger, Patricio Morales, Lori Raetzman, JoAnne Richards, Stefan Schlatt, Robert Viger (Past Chair), Quinton Winger, Lacey Luense (Trainee representative) and Annie Newell-Fugate (Trainee Board Representative).

Please send me your Nomination Packets by 1 December 2013. Submission via e-mail is preferred in order to facilitate review by the entire Awards Committee.

Alternatively, documents may be sent by fax (402-472-6362) or postal mail:

A224k Animal Science Bldg
3940 Fair St
Lincoln, NE 68583-0908

—Jennifer Wood, Chair
Awards Committee
e-mail: jwood5@unl.edu

SSR Major Awards

Carl G. Hartman Award, named for a distinguished reproductive biologist, is SSR’s highest award. It recognizes a career of research and scholarly activities in the reproductive biology field. The nominee does not have to be a member of the Society.

Research Award recognizes an active, Regular member of the Society for outstanding research published during the previous six years.

Distinguished Service Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated unselfish service and leadership in advancing the discipline of reproductive biology.

New Investigator Award recognizes an active, Regular member of the Society for outstanding research completed and published within 12 years after receiving the Ph.D. or other equivalent professional degree.

Trainee Mentoring Award recognizes an active, Regular member of the Society who as a mentor has had a significant impact on trainees within the SSR.

The SSR 2013 award ceremonies. (Clockwise from top left) SSR 2013 major award winners Drs. Spencer, Eddy, Griswold, Pangas (with Mahesh), and Niswender, and the Inuit-art awards that they received.
Call for Nominations of SSR Officers and Directors

The continued, thriving success of the SSR depends on the willingness of members to participate and serve. By nominating candidates and electing SSR Officers and Directors, all members have the opportunity to help shape the leadership and future direction of the Society. Now is the time to consider who amongst your colleagues has the ideas, enthusiasm, and commitment to provide leadership and service to SSR. Remember that the SSR is an international society with members from 45 countries and all regions of the world, so our leadership should reflect this international composition.

We are now accepting nominations of candidates for the offices of Vice President-Elect and for two members of the Board of Directors. Members of the Nominating Committee (Sarah Robertson, Mitch Eddy, Tom Fleming, Peter Hansen, Kazuhiko Imakawa, Peggy Petroff, Marc-André Sirard, Doug Stocco, Barbara Vanderhyden, and trainee members Hanna Valli and Jemma Evans) are not eligible for nomination.

Submit the name of the individual(s) you wish to nominate, his/her professional affiliation, and a brief (1–2 sentences) statement of support. Please contact the individual(s) you wish to nominate to confirm their willingness to be nominated and to serve, if elected.

Visit the SSR website for listings of previous SSR Officers and Board members; their duties are described in the Bylaws. Also, you can find contact details for all current members in the Membership Directory and a record of the past Officers, Board Members, and Committee Members in the SSR Service List. Send your nomination and statement of support to me by Friday, 8 November 2013.

—Sarah A. Robertson, Chair Nominating Committee
e-mail: sarah.robertson@adelaide.edu.au

Update from the Publications Committee

The Publications Committee met in Montreal with lively discussion of several issues. As a group, we are committed to the continued excellence of BOR and to remaining informed about important issues in the world of scientific publishing. But we are also interested in hearing and learning from the membership of SSR about new ventures in publication and creative ways of delivering our message to the general public (e.g., in the realms of social media, web-based learning, etc.). Expect to receive a survey soon, but in the meantime, send us your best ideas!

—Mary Ann Handel and Dan Bernard, Co-Chairs Publications Committee
e-mail: maryann.handel@jax.org and daniel.bernard@mcgill.ca

News from the Editors of Biology of Reproduction

Editorial Change

Over the summer, we took over the editorial reins of Biology of Reproduction. Hearty thanks are due to Drs. Bruce Murphy and Bernard Robaire for their outstanding job in guiding the journal to the highest impact factor in its history. Along with the new team of Associate Editors and the Board of Reviewing Editors, we are committed to continuing the path of Bruce and Bernard in moving the Journal forward. Thus, please continue submitting your most exciting manuscripts and minireviews for publication in the Journal, which will allow us to publish the best findings of reproductive biologists.

—Franco DeMayo and Tom Spencer, Editors-in-Chief Biology of Reproduction
Trainee Tidbits

As always, we’ve been busy on the Trainee Affairs Committee. First and foremost, the annual meeting went very smoothly this year and for those of you who were unable to make it Montreal, you missed out on a great meeting. The three coordinators of trainee-centered activities—Patrick Hannon (University of Illinois; Trainee Mentor Luncheon), Dr. Florencia Ardon (Cornell University; Roommate Referral Service), and Jill Madden (Iowa State University; Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Grant)—provided tremendous coordination and deserve our most sincere thanks for the service they provided trainees and SSR during 2013.

At Montreal, the Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee had the volunteers running like a well-oiled machine, and much of that credit goes to Drs. Sadhat Walusimbi (Pennsylvania State University) and Jane Fenelon (University of Montreal). Jane will be taking over for Sadhat as chair of the Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee for Grand Rapids, while Dr. Niraj Joshi (University of Michigan) will be serving as the co-chair. We are always interested in hearing which events or processes trainees think could have gone smoother. If you have any suggestions, feel free to let us know at trainees@ssr.org.

With the 2013 Annual Meeting behind us, it is time to start looking toward 2014 and beyond. Along these lines, we recently sent you a survey via trainees@ssr.org about some issues we are pursuing within the Trainee Affairs Committee. If you have not done so already, please take a moment to fill out the survey. The survey takes about five minutes to complete.

While Grand Rapids is almost a year away, some items of note for trainees have begun to come together. Importantly, the deadline for the 2014 iteration of the Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund will be 15 February 2014 (the same day abstracts are due for the Annual Meeting). Keep an eye out for application instructions via SSRepro in the coming weeks.

We on the Trainee Affairs Committee have been collaborating with the Heritage Committee to increase trainee attendance at the Heritage Luncheon. The Heritage Luncheon is an excellent way to absorb some of the history from the field of reproductive physiology and is an annual showcase for some of the pioneers in the field of reproductive biology. The luncheon for next year is announced below.

—Tony McNeel and Annie Newell-Fugate, Trainee Representatives
e-mail: tony.mcneel@ars.usda.gov and newellf1@illinois.edu

Trainee Research Poster finalists.
(From left) Won-Hee Song, finalist; Soon-Ok Kim, finalist; Erica K. Ungewitter, 2nd place; and Linah F. Al-Alem, 1st place. Not pictured: Elon Roti Roti, 3rd place; and Jill Bennett, finalist.

Trainee Research Platform finalists.
(From left) Kelsey E. Brooks, finalist; Chang Liu, 1st place; Genna R. Stodden, 2nd place; and Theodore T. Wing, finalist. Not pictured: Kalyne Bertolin, 3rd place; and Ahmed Z. Balboula, finalist.

$5,000 Scholarship for FIR

Trainee members of SSR who want to attend the 17th Annual Frontiers in Reproduction (FIR) course in Woods Hole, Massachusetts (4 May–14 June 2014), may apply for this scholarship from the Anita Payne Endowment.

FIR is an intensive, 6-week laboratory and lecture course for scientists-in-training (graduate students, post-docs, and junior faculty) who seek to improve their knowledge and experimental skills in order to pursue a career in the reproductive sciences.

To apply for the scholarship, indicate your interest while completing the application to attend FIR.

Applications are due 15 January 2014.
Record Attendance at Heritage Luncheon

The Heritage Luncheon provides an opportunity for SSR members to learn about pioneers in reproductive biology from people who typically worked directly with the honoree. There was record attendance (>150 people) at the 2013 SSR Heritage Luncheon in Montreal. Attendees enjoyed hearing Dr. Nathalie Josso pay tribute to Professor Alfred Jost, the “Father of Fetal Endocrinology.” Dr. Josso is Chief Investigator Emeritus at the National Institute of Health and Medical Research in Paris, and she received her Ph.D. under the direction of Professor Jost. Quoting from a tribute in *Endocrinology*, Dr. Josso stated that Dr. Jost “is rightly regarded as the father of modern fetal endocrinology. Up to 1950, birds were the favorite embryological models, because of the technical accessibility of the avian egg. Jost was the first to apply surgical techniques to the intrauterine mammalian fetus. By castrating fetal rabbits at an early, ambivalent stage, he succeeded in preventing male differentiation: the genetic males were born with persistent Müllerian ducts and no Wolffian derivatives.”

Next year, Dr. Chris Polge, who contributed to making the long-term storage of sperm a viable technology, will be the honoree, and Professor Ian Wilmut, who led the team that cloned Dolly, will provide the tribute.

—in Michael F. Smith, Chair Heritage Committee

e-mail: SmithMF@missouri.edu

News from the Endowment Committee

The members of the Endowment Committee thank the SSR members who responded so generously last spring to our request for financial support for the SSR Annual Meeting and trainee travel. The response was excellent and the dollars given helped to defray the expenses of the SSR Meeting and also provided larger travel stipends to our trainees.

Many SSR members know John J. Eppig, who has spent his life training the next generation of scientists and has served SSR in many capacities, e.g., President, Co-Editor-in-Chief of *BOR*, etc. John has retired from his position at The Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine, and, as a retirement gift, John’s friends established the John J. Eppig Endowment Fund. The money contributed will be matched by SSR. You are invited to contribute to the John J. Eppig Endowment Fund as a thank-you to John for his many years of service to SSR and to reproductive biology. This endowment will support the SSR Annual Meeting program by funding the travel of speakers in a designated module or session on female gametogenesis or follicular development.

The purpose of the Endowment Committee is to invite SSR members to contribute to the different SSR Charitable Funds. In the case of endowment funds, the donated money is invested and currently only the returns on the investments are used. However, a number of Charitable Funds are used as needed. The Endowment Committee invites you to review the [SSR Charitable Funds](#) on the SSR website and pick one or several that you are particularly interested in supporting. Even though the end of 2013 is still several months off, it is the ideal time to contribute to a charitable fund and, for SSR members in the U.S., to enjoy a tax break.

—in Janice M. Bahr, Chair Endowment Committee

e-mail: jbahr@uillinois.edu
Updates from the Treasurer

The Good News

As reported at the SSR Business Meeting last summer, we ended 2012 with a balanced operating budget that totaled $1.9 million. Effective fundraising efforts by the Development Committee and Business Office contributed to this healthy bottom line and, in 2013, brought in record-breaking support for scientific sessions, travel grants, and other functions. The Annual Meeting was also very well attended, with a final head count of 1,239, and so was both scientifically and financially successful. To date, the 2013 budget is on track with projections, and we’ll have a full report in the February Newsletter.

The Question

What do we do with our endowments and investments, and when is enough, enough? Our endowment and general investment funds together total about $3.3 million. They are actively managed according to the SSR Investment Policy Statement by RBC Wealth Management to grow at rates that match or exceed the relevant indices. Endowments are Board- or donor-designated for specific purposes, and several are generating enough income to support their intended purposes. Although our focus has been on growing, rather than drawing from, our endowments, a priority this year is to decide how large the set-aside needs to be in the event of an unexpected financial calamity or to address uncertain income streams in today’s economy. Beyond this buffer, we will determine how best to define our priorities for using these resources to support and sustain key functions (e.g., awards, lectures, trainee travel), while also providing support for new initiatives needed in a changing world.

Your input on these issues is always welcome and your continued support and loyalty are greatly appreciated.

—Sally Darney, Treasurer and Marty Matzuk, Assistant Treasurer
e-mail: Darney.Sally@epa.gov

Welcome to the SSR

Change of Status

Associate
Campos, Danila Barreiro
Harvey, Craig N.
Lalancette, Claudia
Suzuki, Joao, Jr.
Valdivia, Martha

Regular
Chen, Chen
Choi, Youngsok
Clarke, Hugh J.
Craig, Zelieann
Jordan, Philip W.
Madan, Pavneesh
Maekawa, Ryo
Smith, Lawrence C.
Tayade, Chandrakant

New Members

Associate
Ahenkorah, John
Gilman, Christine I.
Leblanc, Valerie
O’Handley, Stacey A.
Salamone, Daniel F.
Vanden Brink, Heidi K.
Yang, Qin

Regular
Ajudk, Anna
Anckaert, Ellen
de Assis Neto, Antonio Chaves
De Mestre, Amanda M.
FitzHarris, Greg
Forde, Niamh
Gracia, Clarisa R.

Hamer, Geert
Hourvitz, Ariel
Jaiswal, Yogesh K.
Kjelland, Michael E.
LaMarre, Jonathan
Lash, Gendie E.
Lopez, Luis A.
Moskovtsev, Sergey
Murphy, Shawn P.
Rumi, Mohammad A.K.
Slim, Rima
Tardif, Steve
Ward, Jeremy O.

Trainee
Abbassi, Laleh
Aguiar, Christie
Ahin, SooHyun
Akoury, Elie

Please keep your contributions coming, whether for this fund or for the fund of your choice.
Status of the SSR Membership

Membership in the Society increased by ~2% in 2013, in a reversal of the steady decline that occurred from 2009–2012. Over the last two years, outreach efforts of the Membership Committee to urge current members to renew and recruit new members within North America and targeted international regions has had a major influence on this turn of events. The Committee will continue these efforts in 2014 and asks for support in these endeavors by all members of SSR.

Help from the SSR Membership

The Committee requests that directors of centers/groups for reproductive sciences in North American and international institutions urge all affiliated individuals to renew memberships, if current members, or, if not, to join as new members in 2014.

The Committee asks for help from all members of SSR to spread the word about benefits of membership in the Society and to identify potential new members. A brochure is available for download from the SSR website that details the benefits of membership in SSR and is a great resource to provide to individuals with a potential interest in the Society.

In 2013, the Membership Committee worked with the Business Office to advertise the benefits of membership in SSR and promote the Annual Meeting at regional reproductive sciences symposia throughout North America. For 2014, we aim to continue this effort and ask for assistance from all SSR members in identifying additional venues at which to promote membership. Please send suggestions to the Membership Committee Chair, Jon Oatley.

Membership Renewal

It’s never too early to renew. Online membership renewal is currently available. Please renew this fall before it slips your mind, and urge friends and colleagues to do the same, at: http://www.ssr.org/MembRenew.shtml.

—Jon Oatley, Chair
Membership Committee
e-mail: joatley@wsu.edu

Congratulations to Dr. Bernard Robaire

The membership committee would like to extend its congratulations to Dr. Robaire for his election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada.

In addition to major research contributions in the reproductive sciences, Dr. Robaire is a longstanding member of SSR who has provided selfless service in many capacities. This election is a much-deserved accolade.

More information can be found at: http://rsc-src.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/2013%20New%20Fellows%20Citations_1.pdf

...new members continued

Albert, Oceane
Benoit, Gabriel
Burkin, Heather R.
Bustamante Mari, Ximena
Cowles, Chad L.
Dumont Horta, Carina de Oliveira
Edwards, Nicole A.
El Hayek, Stephany E.
Fadhillah, D.
Fortin, Jerome
Gagnon Duval, Laurianne
Girard, Annie
Ham, Jennifer M.
Hung, Wei Ting
Jarrett, Brittany
Laroche, Anthony
Lechuga, Thomas
Lee, Chaehyun
Mathew, Daniel J.
McNicoll, Francois
Michau, Adelie
Mittal, Priya
Nagata, Yoshiki
Naiche, L.A.
Nguyen, Ngoc Minh Phuong
Oqani, Reza K.
Ortega, Michael A.
PaiBomesai, Marlene
Park, Kang Sun
Patel, Shreya
Patino Chaparro, Joan M.
Poirier, Mikhail
Redel, Bethany K.
Rey, Tamas
Reynolds, Desnatie R.
Roberts, Kimberly E.
Schang, Gauthier
Schuermann, Yasmin
Shluch, Ekaterina
Siklenka, Keith D.
Simpson, Stephanie L.
Smith, Natasha E.
Smith, Olivia
Steinmann, Sarah A.
Takatsu, Koki
Takijiri, Takashi
Tscherne, Allison K.
Vieux, Karl Frederic
White, Carlee R.
Young, Julia
Zhang, Nicole D.
Zhou, Changqing

SSR News, October 2013
First, I would like to recognize the recipients of the Burroughs Wellcome Travel Fellowships, which provide travel funds for trainees and junior faculty members to attend the SSR meeting. Congratulations to our trainees: Florencia Ardon Martínez (Cornell University), Joan Marie Patino (University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez), Jonathan Reil (University of Hawaii at Manoa), Marlene Paibomesai (University of Guelph), Michael A. Ortega (University of Hawaii, Institution for Biogenesis Research), Rosalina Villalon Landeros (University of Wisconsin–Madison), and Thomas Joe Lechuga (University of California, Irvine). This was the first SSR meeting for several of our trainees and we are grateful that they were able to attend. Faculty receiving awards were Almudena Veiga-Lopez (University of Michigan) and Marla Lujan (Cornell University).

The Minority Affairs/Diversity Committee Lunch Symposium, which is always open to all attendees of the Annual Meeting, was once again a great success. The speaker this year was Dr. Tyrone Hayes from the University of California–Berkley, and his presentation was titled, “From Silent Spring to Silent Night: A Tale of Toads and Men.” Dr. Hayes provided a very lively seminar that generated enthusiastic responses from the over 100 attendees, which may be the largest participation ever for the symposium. Dr. Hayes advocated for scientists to be more active in educating the public, especially children, and to emphasize important issues of the effects of pesticide use and the subsequent health disparities. If you were unable to make it this year in Montreal, please be sure to make plans to participate next year in Grand Rapids. Again, the symposium is open to all attendees at SSR and is a great venue for trainees to meet peers and mentors.

During the Diversity Committee meeting, a topic of discussion was how to increase the number of people attending the symposium. It is important to note that individuals do not have to be classified as racial or ethnic minorities to attend. The committee is also eager to plan the speaker for next year’s symposium, and several suggestions were made at the meeting. However, the speaker has not yet been chosen, and we would happily entertain any suggestions for potential speakers for next year’s symposium. Feel free to contact me with recommendations.

In a final bit of news, our committee will continue to reach out to young scientists from underrepresented populations by attending the Society for Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) meeting in San Antonio, TX, 3–6 October. Dr. Rocío Melissa Rivera (University of Missouri) and I will attend this year and we look forward to a great meeting. Thanks to funding from FASEB MARC and SSR, we will once again be able to represent SSR and continue recruiting efforts of talented undergraduate students by offering one-year complimentary SSR memberships to students presenting posters related to reproductive science.

If you would like to get involved in Diversity Committee events, please contact Dr. Jennifer Hernandez Gifford, Chair (Oklahoma State University; jah.hernandez_gifford@okstate.edu), or myself. Finally, a big thank-you is in order for Dr. Carol Linder, the previous chair of the Diversity Committee. Carol has devoted much time and energy to this committee and her hard work is truly appreciated. We look forward to seeing you next year in Grand Rapids!

—Ryan Ashley, Co-Chair
Diversity Committee
e-mail: ryashley@nmsu.edu
Minutes of the SSR 2013 Business Meeting: 25 July 2013

**Call to Order:** Dr. Susan Suarez called the Business Meeting to order at 5:42 PM. Approximately 120 members were in attendance.

**Approval of the Minutes of the 2012 Annual Business Meeting:** Dr. Suarez asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the 2012 Business Meeting, which were previously published in the October 2012 SSR Newsletter. No additions or corrections were offered. **Dr. John McCarrery moved to accept the Minutes of the 2012 Annual Business Meeting. Dr. Richard Schultz seconded. The motion carried.**

**President’s Remarks:** Dr. Suarez commented that her term as SSR President was a remarkable experience due to the many enjoyable interactions with numerous SSR members who contribute to the Society. She encouraged members to nominate individuals for Board positions and Society awards and greater international participation in all aspects of the Society. She announced that the new SSR website rebuild is nearing completion and that San Diego has been selected as the location for the 2016 SSR Annual Meeting. The 2015 and 2014 meetings will be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, respectively. Dr. Suarez recognized and thanked Drs. Bruce Murphy and Hugh Clarke, the 2013 Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs; Drs. Sadhat Walusimbi and Jane Fenelon, Co-Chairs of the Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee; and Drs. Janice Bailey and Janice Evans, Co-Chairs of the Program Committee; for their outstanding work. She thanked Drs. Bernard Robaire and Bruce Murphy for their service as Co-Editors-in-Chief of *Biology of Reproduction* for the past four years.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Dr. Sally Darney reviewed SSR Operations for 2012 and noted that revenue generated in the categories of Publications, Annual Meeting, and Dues amounted to $1,790,149, and expenses in the categories of Publications, Member Services, and Annual Meeting totaled $1,788,048. She commented that dues partially support membership services, but that publications and meetings income as well as grants and fundraising also support membership services. The Larry Ewing Memorial Trainee Travel Fund (LEMTTF) provided support for 178 travel grants from several sources, including: a) $25,000 from an NIH grant that supported U.S. trainee travel; b) $12,000 from membership donations and T-shirt sales; and c) a Board-approved $16,000 supplement that was needed this year to cover the large number of applications. A total of $53,000 in LEMTTF funds provided an average award of $300, adjusted for distance traveled. Annual Meeting attendance was over 1,200 and there were outstanding fundraising efforts. Publications income and expenses are on track; the new SSR website will be launched soon. The long-range sustainability picture based upon the SSR Investment Account holdings of $3,212,243 is good. Funds are distributed in global equities, alternatives, and fixed income and the yield over the past four years is 6%, which equals the benchmark appropriate to our asset allocation mix. The current SSR Investment Account is divided into unrestricted assets for contingencies and special projects and endowment funds generated from member donations. Over the past 5 years, member donations have included the following: a) $44,875 in 2009 plus $100,000 for the new Anita Payne Endowment; b) $39,583 in 2010; c) $34,224 in 2011; d) $54,064 in 2012; and e) about $40,000 thus far in 2013. Dr. Darney noted that SSR members give for a purpose to specific funds such as the Legacy Fund (for online publication of *BOR* prior to the online journal), which has a current value of $260,963; b) the Virendra B. Mahesh Neuroendocrine Program Fund, which was initiated with a generous donation by Dr. Mahesh and that is currently valued at $106,679; the Virendra B. Mahesh New Investigator Endowment Fund initiated in 2008 and that is currently valued at $120,748; c) the Anita Payne Endowment created in 2010, currently valued at $123,671; the Trainee Mentoring Fund created in 2010, currently valued at $7,774; the Past Presidents’ Fund created in 2011, currently valued at $26,141; and the General Endowment Fund, currently valued at $508,273. The total for these funds is $1,146,450. In 2013, colleagues and friends of Dr. John Eppig contributed to a surprise fund in his honor, which currently stands at approximately $26,000 and is available for additional contributions. The Board has voted to match all contributions to the Eppig Fund at the end of 2013. **Dr. Asgi Fazleabas moved to accept the Treasurer’s report. Dr. Mary Ann Handel seconded. The motion carried.**

**Outgoing Editors-in-Chief of Biology of Reproduction:** Dr. Bernard Robaire commented that it was a good year for *Biology of Reproduction (BOR)* as the number of submissions had increased and the quality
of papers continued to improve. The acceptance rate for papers this year was 53%, and feedback on the new features introduced over the past four years was very positive. He noted that all measures of journal impact have been improving: the half-life of BOR papers now exceeds 10 years, and the impact factor is currently above 4. Attendees were encouraged to continue sending their best papers. He noted that the Journal was fortunate to have an outstanding group of Associate Editors. He commented that he had appreciated the opportunity to have been selected to serve the Society. Dr. Bruce Murphy added that during their tenure as Editors-in-Chief, they had handled more than 2,600 manuscripts and published over 1,400 papers. The editorial team had worked well together and he thanked the authors, reviewers, Board of Reviewing Editors, Associate Editors, and the Editorial Office. He noted that he and Dr. Robaire would miss the job of seeing the best work of Society members. He thanked the Society for the honor of entrusting the journal to himself and Dr. Robaire, and that they had passed the Journal in good condition on to worthy successors in Drs. Franco DeMayo and Tom Spencer. Dr. McCarrey moved to accept the report of the outgoing Editors-in-Chief of BOR. Dr. Schultz seconded. The motion carried.

Publications Committee: Dr. Mary Ann Handel, who is the incoming Co-Chair (along with Dr. Daniel Bernard), presented the report on behalf of outgoing chair, Dr. Alan Johnson. She noted that during the past year, the Committee had increased advertising of the Journal through several mechanisms, including an e-mail marketing campaign and through social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and a “News and Updates” blog. The Publications Committee will continue to evaluate the efficacy of these initiatives. During the past year, the Committee provided input to the Board in support of signing on to the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) initiative, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which recommends not to use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles for assessing an individual scientist’s contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions. The Committee also advised the Board to support the Clearinghouse for the Open Research of the United States (CHORUS), which calls for a distributed approach to public access whereby publishers would host the open access content on their sites while retaining the right to determine the format offered. This system would have advantages to publishers by keeping online traffic directed to publisher sites and advantages to the federal agencies because the proposed solution would entail little or no cost to the government. Dr. Robaire moved to accept the report of the Publications Committee. Dr. Schultz seconded. The motion carried.

Trainee Affairs Committee: Dr. Zelieann Craig, Senior Trainee Representative, presented the report of the Committee. Dr. Suarez presented Dr. Craig with a plaque in appreciation for her contributions to SSR as the retiring Trainee Representative on the Board. Dr. Craig reported that nearly half (578) of this year’s meeting attendees were trainees, although 142 of these trainees were not SSR members. She encouraged non-member trainees to consider SSR membership and encouraged their mentors to support their application. The LEMTTF, which honors the memory of Dr. Larry Ewing and provides assistance for trainees to attend the Annual Meeting, is supported by donations, T-shirt sales, and NIH funding. This year, the program was coordinated by Jill Madden and assisted 178 trainees from all over the world. She asked SSR members to consider donating to the program. Records were broken this year with the Trainee-Mentor Luncheon. Patrick Hannon recruited 29 mentors to participate with 200 trainees. She thanked the mentors for making this networking opportunity possible. She concluded her report by thanking a number of individuals, including all the members the Trainee Affairs Committee, Dr. Florencia Ardon for coordinating the roommate referral service, and Drs. Sadhat Walusimbi and Jane Fenelon for co-chairing the Trainee Volunteer Subcommittee. She offered special thanks to the Trainee Affairs Committee advisors—Drs. Olga Bolden Tiller, Mary Ann Handel, and Joan Jorgensen. She acknowledged the more than 80 trainees who had volunteered and helped the meeting progress smoothly, and thanked Drs. Robertson, Murphy, Bazer, Handel, Curry, Schubert, and Yao for accepting the invitation to speak at the Trainee Forum, which was inspired by the suggestions of trainees. She thanked Dr. Tony McNeel, who was assuming the role of Senior Trainee Rep, for organizing the Trainee Affairs booth and for always bringing great ideas to the table, and then congratulated Annie Newell-Fugate, the new Junior Trainee Representative on the Board. Lastly, she thanked Dr. Jodi Flaws, who supported her decision to run as Trainee Representative, and Dr. Patricia Hoyer for transmitting the appreciation for reproductive biology and dedication to the
SSR. Dr. Suarez thanked Dr. Craig and noted the valued and thoughtful contributions of trainees to Board discussions and decisions. **Dr. Jock Findlay moved to accept the report of the Trainee Affairs Committee. Dr. Handel seconded. The motion carried.**

**Bylaws Committee:** Dr. Rabindranath De La Fuente presented the report on behalf of the Chair, Dr. Janette Dufour. The following 5 amendments were presented for discussion during the Business Meeting prior to a vote in the fall: Amendment 1: To change the name of the Minority Affairs Committee to the Diversity Committee. The proposed change is to have a name that is more inclusive. Amendment 2: To change the number of voting members of the Board of Directors from eleven to twelve. The proposed change is to correct the Bylaws since there are now twelve members of the Board of Directors. Amendment 3: To add immediate Past President to the SSR Officers. The proposed change is to correct the Bylaws since the immediate Past President is considered an officer. Amendment 4: To change the number of years an individual can serve on the Board of Directors from six to seven. The proposed change is to account for the additional year as Vice President-Elect. Amendment 5: To add the Future Meetings Committee to the Bylaws. The Future Meetings Committee is now a standing committee, which requires it to be added to the Bylaws. The proposed amendments will be presented in the Fall 2013 Newsletter in advance of an electronic vote. **Dr. Fazleabas moved to accept the report of the Bylaws Committee. Dr. Flaws seconded. The motion carried.**

**Membership Committee:** Dr. Kate Loveland presented the report on behalf of Dr. Jon Oatley. Dr. Loveland reported that during the past year SSR membership had increased more than 8% and that as of June 2013, there are 1,777 SSR members. The international base of membership is increasing, with over 760 international members representing 46 countries. The Membership Committee is looking for opportunities to promote and encourage recruitment of new members. One mechanism that is currently being used is communication with current and potential SSR members through contact at regional reproductive biology meetings in the U.S. and international regions. Dr. Loveland encouraged members to contact Dr. Oatley with information about meetings such as these where SSR membership might be promoted. A new initiative that has been approved by the Board of Directors is the implementation of an early career membership option for trainees transitioning to regular membership that provides a 50% reduction in regular member dues for the first two years. Dr. Loveland then asked for a moment of silence of in recognition of the SSR members who had passed away during the past year: Drs. Harry M. Weitlauf, Norman Hecht, and Minoro Nakano. **Dr. Fazleabas moved to accept the report of the Membership Committee. Dr. Schultz seconded. The motion carried.**

Dr. Suarez then recognized retiring Officers, Directors, and the Trainee Representative and presented each with a plaque. She thanked Drs. Blanche Capel and John McCarrey for their contributions as Directors and noted that Dr. McCarrey will serve one more year as Director to replace Dr. Spencer, one of the new Co-Editors-in-Chief of *Biology of Reproduction*. She then thanked and presented plaques to Drs. Barbara Vanderhyden, Robert Burghardt, Zelieann Craig, Richard Schultz, and Jock Findlay for their service as Past President, Secretary, Senior Trainee Representative, Vice President-Elect and Vice President, respectively. Dr. Suarez then installed Dr. Findlay as SSR President, noting that he is the first SSR President from outside of North America.

Dr. Findlay thanked Dr. Suarez for her many contributions, including many new initiatives, on behalf of the Society. He presented Dr. Suarez with a plaque in recognition of her service as President and noted that she had been very effective at keeping Board discussions on track. The job of President comes with unanticipated duties, which she handled effectively. This year’s meeting incorporated her ideas about the program and she worked closely with the Program Committee Co-Chairs, Drs. Bailey and Evans.

**New Business:** Dr. Findlay commented that the internationalization of the Society was reflected in his selection as the first SSR President outside of North America and that he looked forward to his leadership role. He then reported that the Program Committee for the 2014 Annual Meeting had been established, and introduced the Co-Chairs of the Program Committee, Professor Lois Salamonsen and Dr. Jon Hennebold.
Proposed Bylaws Changes Are Ready for Ballot

Over the past year, the Bylaws Committee has been working on five proposed amendments to the SSR Bylaws. The proposed amendments were recently approved by the Board of Directors and discussed at the Annual Business Meeting at the 46th Annual SSR Meeting in Montreal. In accordance with the procedures for revision of the Bylaws, the proposed amendments will be submitted to a vote by the Regular Members of SSR. A change of the Bylaws requires approval of two-thirds of the Regular Members who have submitted a ballot.


The current Bylaws are available at http://www.ssr.org/Documents/2013-01-09bylaws.pdf

Any questions or comments related to the proposed amendments are welcome. The Bylaws Committee is always happy to receive any suggestions or concerns that you may have.

—Jannette M. Dufour, Chair
Bylaws Committee
e-mail: jannette.dufour@ttuhsc.edu
From the 2014 Local Arrangements Committee

“Grand Rapids, Michigan, is one of America’s coolest cities.”

So said Men’s Journal magazine in 2011, when it ranked Grand Rapids alongside a handful of other cities that are defining cool for the 21st century. “Few cities anywhere do more to support creativity than Michigan’s second-largest metropolis,” the magazine wrote. It’s true, Grand Rapids has always been fueled by the power of imagination. It’s a city that thinks big, takes chances, and continually surprises with events, attractions, and experiences that far exceed expectations. The surprises begin in downtown Grand Rapids, where a sparkling, one-million-sq.-ft. convention center, which is the venue for the meeting, is connected to nearby hotels via a climate-controlled skywalk. Our headquarters hotel, the Amway Grand Plaza, was named the 12th best in all of North America by Condé Nast Traveler Magazine.

Grand Rapids is easily accessible—it is less than 6 hours’ driving distance from most places in the Central Midwest and Western Pennsylvania. The Gerald Ford International Airport is served by all major airlines and has over 120 direct flights a day from virtually every major hub city in North America. Please make sure to book your flights early to get the best fares.

Grand Rapids has a number of exclusive shops and distinctive dining spots. Dozens of restaurants are located within a five-minute walk of the hotel and convention center. You’ll find something for every taste, from upscale seafood and steak restaurants to casual family-style cafés to exotic ethnic eateries and more—including San Chez, a tapas bistro named one of America’s Top 50 Hispanic Restaurants by Hispanic Magazine.

If it’s nightlife you’re after, you’re in the right place—smack dab in the middle of a dynamic entertainment district offering everything from chic jazz clubs to rollicking sports bars. On any given night, you can attend a hockey game, see a touring Broadway show, or attend a professional opera, ballet, or symphony presentation. Van Andel Arena, another link in the city’s skywalk chain, regularly hosts some of the world’s biggest music acts, from Taylor Swift to Lady Gaga.

Make sure you check out the B.O.B. during the meeting. This Big Old Building is a 70,000-sq.-ft., four-story renovated warehouse that houses several restaurants, a cigar lounge, microbrewery, comedy club, dance club, billiards hall, jazz stage, and wine cellar. You can easily spend the whole evening there!

However, there’s plenty to do before the sun goes down. The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, located just across the salmon-rich Grand River from DeVos Place, pays tribute to the life and times of Grand Rapids’ most famous native son. It’s a fascinating stop for anyone who appreciates history, politics, and public service. You might follow up your Ford Museum visit with a trip to the Grand Rapids Public Museum. Just a few hundred yards away, the Public Museum features three floors of exciting exhibits, including a working antique carousel and seven galleries of West Michigan habitats.
A Feast for the Eyes

Walk another few blocks and you’ll discover the Grand Rapids Art Museum. This 125,000-sq.-ft. facility was the subject of New York Times and USA Today articles even before it opened in October 2007. It symbolizes two core values of Grand Rapids: sustainability and art appreciation. This was the world’s first LEED-certified art museum, built to meet stringent “green design” standards that help minimize environmental impact. It’s one of the many reasons Grand Rapids was christened “America’s Greenest City” by Fast Company Magazine.

It’s also one of many reasons Grand Rapids has become an international arts destination. The city’s design consciousness extends all the way back to its original inhabitants, the Hopewell Indians, who created some of the finest artwork of the ancient Americas. In the 1800s, Grand Rapids became known as the furniture capital of America, renowned for the style and design of its fine wood furniture. In 1969, the city was chosen as the site of the very first civic sculpture jointly financed by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) and private funds. Today, Grand Rapids is the home of ArtPrize, the world’s richest, most radically open art competition.

Also within the downtown stroll zone: The Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts showcases cutting-edge work in a spacious new facility anchoring the emerging Avenue for the Arts. Kendall College of Art & Design offers an ever-changing gallery of student work. The Heritage Hill district of historic homes encompasses 1,300 19th-century homes in 60 eye-popping architectural styles.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world’s 100 most-visited art museums, is just a few minutes from downtown via the expressway. The stunning grounds include a world-class outdoor sculpture collection, a tropical conservatory, nature trails, children’s garden, and much more.

The Art of Food

Visual arts aren’t the only expression of the city’s creativity. Grand Rapids is also known for the quality of its performing arts, the sophistication of its product design, and the caliber of its cuisine.

Thanks to the unique growing conditions fostered by Lake Michigan, Grand Rapids is surrounded by hundreds of family farms that grow everything from apples and asparagus to strawberries and sweet corn. Many local restaurants have been purchasing fresh produce, meat, and dairy products from these farms for decades, making Grand Rapids an early model for the sustainable, farm-to-table movement now sweeping the nation. Farm-to-table restaurants, such as the Grove, Brandywine, Electric Cheetah, The Green Well, Marie Catrib’s, San Chez, and The Winchester, continue to set new standards for fresh, creative menus.

Enjoy just-picked fruits and vegetables from these same farms at the Fulton Street Farmers Market just east of downtown, or enjoy the newly opened Downtown Indoor Market, which is within walking distance of the hotel. The market boasts 50 permanent indoor vendors, unique restaurants, and an outdoor farmers market, all carrying locally sourced food and goods. Wine lovers, take heart—the city is also home to a number of excellent wineries and premier wine bars, all within walking distance of our venue.
Grand Rapids is the gateway city to Michigan’s West Coast, a picturesque region dominated by the influence of Lake Michigan.

Kids and adults alike love the clean, sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters of Lake Michigan—named one of the world’s top 25 shorelines by Condé Nast Traveler Magazine. Charming resort villages dot the coastline, offering excellent shopping and dining as well as convenient fishing, boating, and jet-skiing opportunities.

All of these things to see and do—and the ease of getting around—makes Grand Rapids a great venue for SSR!! You might even want to consider extending your visit and planning a family vacation to experience the maximum amount of cool!

During the coming months, members of the Local Arrangements Committee will post blogs about all there is to do and see in “Pure Michigan.” Your hosts, the Michigan Alliance for Reproductive and Translational Science (MARTS), look forward to welcoming you all to Grand Rapids next year.

—Asgi T. Fazleabas, Chair
Local Arrangements Committee

From the SSR 2014 Program Committee

Fertility: A Global Challenge

This year’s theme highlights the impact that reproductive science has on the environment, wildlife species, domesticated animals, human fertility, and population growth, as well as the interaction between them. Currently, the Program Committee is working hard to develop modules around this theme and to invite speakers who will be of interest to all SSR members. To those of you who contributed suggestions for the 2014 program, thank you!

We are happy to announce that we have confirmed speakers for most of the plenary talks. SSR President Jock Findlay, Ph.D. (Prince Henry’s Institute of Medical Research), will host a President’s Symposium focusing on the success and challenges associated with advancing the next generation of effective and safe contraceptives, including new developments in male and nonhormonal female contraceptives. This symposium will include two lectures, followed by a roundtable discussion of issues related to contraceptive research and development by a panel of experts from academia and the National Institutes of Health.

Symposium Lectures

Christina C. Wang, M.D. (UCLA), has been involved in many funded basic and clinical research studies. Her current clinical research includes androgen replacement therapy, hormonal male contraceptive
development, androgen metabolism, aging in men, and environment effects on sperm quality. She is a world leader in efforts to develop a safe, effective, and reversible hormonal male contraceptive. **Jeffrey T. Jensen, M.D.** (Oregon Health and Science University), is involved in basic and clinical research focusing on the development of new methods of contraception. He and his staff concentrate on translational research designed to bring laboratory advances into clinical practice. His experience in family planning inspires his dedication to the development of safe and widely accessible female contraceptives.

**Roundtable Discussion Participants**

**Richard L. Stouffer, Ph.D.** (Oregon National Primate Research Center), is co-director of the Center’s NIH-sponsored Contraceptive Development & Research Center. His research focuses on understanding factors controlling the growth and ovulation of the mature primate follicle at midcycle, such that this can be used to develop contraceptives for preclinical trials using nonhuman primate models.

**Diana L. Blithe, Ph.D.** (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) has expertise in biochemistry, endocrinology, and glycobiology. Dr. Blithe is the Program Director for the Contraceptive Development Research Centers Program and the Male Contraceptive Development Program. She also serves as the Co-Director of the Contraceptive Clinical Trials Network, overseeing clinical trials to evaluate the safety and efficacy of new contraceptive agents for both sexes.

**John K. Amory, M.D.** (University of Washington), is an internationally known investigator in the areas of male contraception and male hypogonadism. His principal area of expertise is male reproductive health, and his research is focused on the development of safe, effective, and reversible forms of male contraception.

The President’s Symposium dovetails perfectly with the Keynote Lecture, “Increasing Global Contraceptive Use,” which will be given by **Anna Glasier, M.D.** Dr. Glasier is a recognized world expert on emergency contraception and has been an instrumental figure in its deregulation. As such, she has held a great number of memberships on advisory boards, committees, steering groups, and panels at the local, national, and international level. She has advised such notable organizations as the World Health Organization, the Population Council, and the Wellcome Trust. In 1989, Dr. Glasier became a clinical scientist in the MRC Unit of Reproductive Biology and was appointed Director of Family Planning & Well Woman Services for Lothian. She held that position from 1990 until 2010. She is now an honorary professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Department of Public Health and Policy) and the University of Edinburgh (Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology).

Additional confirmed lectures include the following:

- A Plenary Lecture by **Milo C. Wiltbank, Ph.D.** (University of Wisconsin), focusing on reproductive issues related to agriculturally relevant species.
- A Historical Perspectives lecture on the history of cloning by **Sir Ian Wilmut, FRS** (University of Edinburgh).
- A State-of-the-Art Lecture by **Richard E. Green, Ph.D.** (University of California Santa Cruz), on reproduction and human evolution.

Lastly, the 2012 Meeting at Penn State replaced minisymposia with focused or themed modules, a restructuring that was maintained at the 2013 Meeting in Montreal. Feedback was positive from members at both meetings; thus, the 2014 Meeting in Grand Rapids will continue this new and evolving format. The modules for 2014 will focus on “function” to provide a more global “systems” overview of reproductive biology. Proposed module themes for 2014 include:

Research Community Continues to Feel the Impact of Sequestration Amid Another Budget Battle

Six months after the automatic spending reductions known as sequestration went into effect, federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), are bracing for another round of budget uncertainty as Congress and President Obama struggle to find common ground on fiscal issues. Lawmakers will be making critical decisions about funding for NIH, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and other science agencies over the next few months, but it is unclear whether they will be able to reach agreement on an alternative deficit-reduction plan to replace sequestration.

The latest budget battle began in March, when the House and Senate approved separate “budget resolutions” (broad spending plans) that took vastly different approaches toward fiscal year (FY) 2014 funding. Assuming that another round of sequestration cuts will be implemented next year, the House set the overall spending level for discretionary spending (which funds NIH, NSF, and other domestic programs) at $967 billion, the level mandated by the Budget Control Act (BCA). The Senate approved a top line limit of $1.058 trillion, more than $90 billion higher than the House budget. In early June, the White House signaled that it preferred the Senate’s spending limit by issuing a Statement of Administration Policy stating that President Obama would veto any of the appropriations bills “that implement the House Republican budget framework,” because the $967 billion spending level shortchanged domestic priorities.

Following passage of the “budget resolutions,” the Appropriations Committees began working on the 12 FY 2014 funding bills, even though they had not resolved the dispute over the $90 billion difference.

Current Status of Funding for Selected Research Agencies (as of 1 Sept. 2013)

<table>
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<th>AGENCY</th>
<th>CURRENT FUNDING LEVEL (post-sequestration)</th>
<th>HOUSE</th>
<th>HOUSE COMPARED TO FY2013</th>
<th>SENATE</th>
<th>SENATE COMPARED TO FY2013</th>
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<td>NIH</td>
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<td>$7.4 billion</td>
<td>+ $500 million</td>
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</tbody>
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• **Ovarian Workshop.** The organizers of the SSR Meeting and the Ovarian Workshop are working closely to integrate the latest findings in ovarian research into this biannual event.

• **Translation of Basic Science to Real-World Practice.** Areas of focus tentatively include: A) Wildlife, Feral Species, Companion Animals; B) Agricultural/Large Animal Species; C) Humans/Nonhuman Primate Models; and D) Cancer.

• **Interrelationship of Reproduction and the Environment.** Topics tentatively include: A) Toxicology, B) Endocrine Disruptors, and C) Obesity and Nutrition.


The abstract submission deadline of 15 February 2014 will be here before you know it. Start thinking about those abstracts! See you in Grand Rapids.

—Jon Hennebold and Lois Salamonsen, Co-Chairs
Program Committee

e-mail: henneboj@ohsu.edu and lois.salamonsen@princehenrys.org
between the House and Senate spending levels. By the time lawmakers left Washington for their summer break, the Senate Appropriations Committee had approved 11 of 12 spending measures and the House had approved ten. In good news for the biomedical research community, the Senate appropriators recommended an increase for NIH that would essentially replace the funding lost due to sequestration (the House did not act on the NIH bill).

Despite the initial progress on the spending bills, members of Congress returned to Capitol Hill in early September to begin consideration of a 60- to 90-day “continuing resolution” (CR) to keep the government funded beyond the start of FY 2014 on 1 October. The CR was expected to continue spending at the current, post-sequester rate of $988 billion. Although passage of a CR will avoid a government shutdown, federal agencies, like NIH, will be unable to begin new initiatives.

The long-term fiscal outlook for FY 2014 will depend on how Congress handles the unfinished spending bills that were approved by the Appropriations Committees this summer and whether members are able to agree on replacing the sequestration cuts with an alternative deficit-reduction plan. Many members of Congress have cited the impact on research funding as a reason why sequestration must be cancelled. In June, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D–NV) spoke on the Senate floor about the benefits of research funded by NIH. He mentioned his wife’s battle with breast cancer and spoke out against sequestration, noting that the cuts to research funding are “shortsighted” and “will cost us valuable cures tomorrow.”

One possible outcome is an “omnibus” bill that combines funding for all federal agencies and programs into a single package that could be passed in December, before (or as) the CR expires. Another option is to wrap consideration of the FY 2014 funding issues and sequestration into a larger bill that addresses a related fiscal matter—raising the debt ceiling. On 26 August, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew sent a letter to House and Senate leadership announcing that the government will hit the debt ceiling in mid-October and urging Congress to raise the ceiling “as soon as possible.” This was a significant development, as most forecasters had said the debt-limit decision could be postponed until November. Republicans began drafting a list of things they wanted in exchange for raising the debt ceiling, including a delay in implementation of the Affordable Care Act, additional spending cuts, approval of the Keystone oil pipeline, and changes in entitlement programs. At the same time, President Obama continued to insist that he would not negotiate on raising the debt limit, leaving no clear path forward for resolving the budget disputes.

In other news from Capitol Hill, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D–WI) was expected to introduce legislation in late September to create the Next Generation Research Initiative within the NIH Office of the Director, to continue existing efforts to help early-stage investigators secure grant funding and allow NIH to implement the recommendations of the Biomedical Workforce Working Group and the Working Group on Diversity in the Biomedical Workforce. The legislation also authorizes a National Academy of Sciences study to review factors affecting the ability of early-stage and new investigators to enter the biomedical research workforce.

—Jennifer Zeitzer, Director of Legislative Relations
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

Databases and Educational Resources

The Public Affairs Committee is looking to refresh the Resources Database links on its SSR page.

We currently have links to Ovarian Kaleidoscope, Endometrium, Mammalian Reproductive Genetics, and Reproductive Tissue Sample Repository.

We encourage all members to propose additional validated databases and educational resources that may be useful to our membership.

Please e-mail suggestions—with a current link—for consideration.

Resources that are environmental-science related, agriculturally important, or endangered-species focused are especially encouraged.
Advocating for the SSR

Many of the Public Affairs Committee’s continuing advocacy activities are focused on raising legislative awareness and fostering congressional support for FY 2014 sustained funding for scientific and biomedical research, and disseminating information regarding the effects of continuing mandated federal “sequestration,” i.e., automatic funding cuts. An informative and current-as-of-this-month bullet-point factsheet is posted on the SSR Resources/PAC site for your use; we encourage all U.S. members to proactively contact their local representatives in Congress to urge their support for basic and translational research.

These efforts are greatly facilitated by our formal association with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), as well as joining in support with sister professional societies on issues of joint concern to our members. Information on such efforts can be found on the SSR Resources/PAC site under “Statements” (e.g., SSR’s sign-on to a recent letter to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, regarding coverage for clinical trials). Additional details on shared advocacy efforts to sustain federal investment in support of funding for NIH, NSF, Department of Energy Science (DOE SC), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) are indicated in the FASEB report above.

Collaborative advocacy and outreach efforts on behalf of U.S. federal research funding for constituent societies can also be found in a 30-minute narrated webinar presentation.

In response to a 2013 initiative endorsed by the Board, Laura Schulz, PAC Co-Chair, has assembled a subcommittee of PAC members to brainstorm and evaluate ideas and develop a strategic action plan for achieving important 2013–2014 SSR goals for better public awareness and active engagement with the lay public through various forms of media and outreach. Such a draft plan is currently taking form in collaboration with other SSR committees, including Publications and Annual Meeting Committee members with joint PAC appointments. Selected, detailed ideas will soon be presented to the Board for their review, input, and approval. Laura and the PAC will then be responsible for implementing the approved ideas during the coming months.

―Patricia L. Morris, Chair
Public Affairs Committee
FASEB Board Member, SSR
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Editor’s Note

Congratulations to Mark Crowe of University College Dublin, whose entry was drawn from a list of correct answers to the editor’s quiz in the June issue. Elephants—both Asian and African—have the longest gestation period in mammals, at about 22 months. To enter the contest for the October issue, e-mail me with the location of the first SSR meeting. Comments and suggestions on the newsletter are always welcome.

―Laura Schulz, Editor
e-mail: laura.c.schulz@gmail.com