

A MESSAGE from the President

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of its founding, the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) has completed a successful 2009 fiscal year. Despite a challenging external environment, SfN foresees a strong future based on an enduring vision, effective execution of that vision, and the ability to anticipate and adapt to a changing environment. The growing, global field that SfN supports stands on a cusp of transformational progress thanks to new discoveries, tools, and techniques. As one of the largest scientific societies in the world, SfN is also successfully evolving and adapting to lay the groundwork for the next 40 years with new programs and expanding outreach.

SfN, along with the broader scientific community, celebrates the discipline of evolution this year. In part, this recognizes the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, a publication that shaped the exponential 20th century explosion of bioscience discovery. Today, as the 21st century approaches a second decade, that scientific foundation is sparking new advances across the sciences and especially in neuroscience.

Evolution also speaks to SfN's 40th anniversary. On July 11, 1969 — just a few days before men first walked on the moon — 13 leading neuroscientists created SfN. Then, the goal was to “encourage ... the increase and diffusion of knowledge of nervous systems ... bring together neuroscientists from all relevant disciplines ... facilitate integration of research at all levels ... promote education ... inform the public ... and promote other activities.” Now, I hope those founders look with pride as the organization they and countless others fostered has evolved to support such a growing and dynamic field. SfN is a thriving society of nearly 39,000 scientists around the globe who are making extraordinary progress in solving basic scientific puzzles and elucidating the underlying

mechanisms of a wide range of debilitating diseases.

SfN is still focused on achieving that enduring vision articulated 40 years ago, and the contributions during this past year have been significant. Last fall, the Society held the third largest annual meeting in SfN history, as more than 31,000 scientists, clinicians, and advocates met in Washington, DC, where news coverage of the scientific discoveries tripled compared to previous years. Meanwhile, *The Journal of Neuroscience* continued its record of success as one of the leading journals in the field, publishing more articles than any other neuroscience-related journal and cited twice as often.

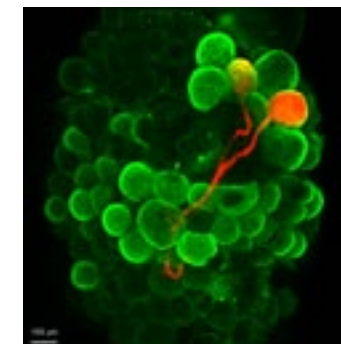
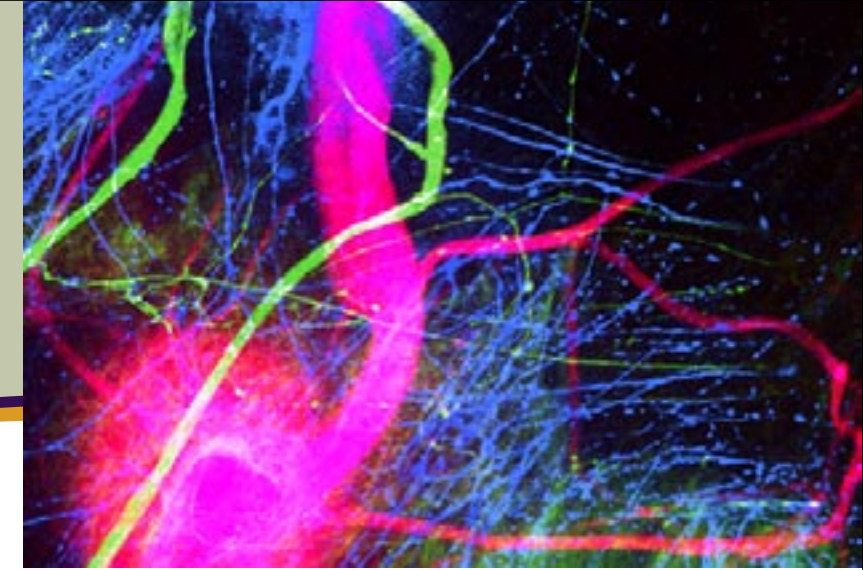
To better support the neuroscience community and respond to expressed member needs, the Society's professional development programming is evolving as well. In late June, new strategies and structures were put in place to strengthen and coordinate professional development and higher education activities. These efforts will enable SfN to better serve our growing and increasingly diverse field. Some recent data offer a snapshot of SfN's changing composition: International members — and especially international student members — are the fastest growing segment of membership. Thirty-six percent of members are non-U.S. residents and of those, 91 percent live in developed countries, largely Europe, Canada, and Japan. More expanded programming will seek to serve neuroscientists worldwide throughout their careers, and will take advantage of the growing number and activity of SfN chapters, which now total 138 in 18 countries.

SfN public education and information activity was extraordinarily productive in FY2009, with the launch of three major education tools that will continue to be key elements of SfN's work in

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years to come: First, *Neuroscience Core Concepts*, a scholarly treatment of neuroscience fundamentals, was developed; second, an online education resource portal called NERVE was created and implemented; and finally, a new edition of *Brain Facts* was developed. All of these tools ensure that accurate and accessible information is widely available to teachers at all levels, as well as to the broader public. SfN also expanded its public education focus to explore the intersection of learning and the brain, an area called “neuroeducation.” The project seeks to catalyze efforts of scientists and educators effectively working together to explore how the science of brain function can inform how teachers teach.

SfN's approach to advocacy for research funding also leaped forward in 2009 and we continued to aggressively support responsible animal research. Extraordinary economic times created funding opportunities in the United States not seen for science in a decade, and SfN members were active in making the case for such a strong science investment. After years of stagnant funding, the new resources hopefully also communicate to the next generation of scientists, first, they should stay the course in the field, and second, their contributions are integral to society's health, scientific, and economic futures. The economic climate created challenges, as well as new opportunities, for research funding all around the globe, as policy-makers in many countries began to tune in to the myriad ways



Identified neurons in the central nervous system of the marine mollusk *Aplysia californica* exemplify simple forms of learning and memory.

in which a strong scientific research base can contribute to economic revitalization and job creation.

At the same time, the renewed investment in science is creating new responsibilities to effectively communicate the scientific, health, social, and economic value of research. SfN takes this challenge seriously for every audience — whether it is the educators of our children, public policy leaders, scientific peers, or the general public — and continues to work vigorously to promote the benefit of basic, translational, and clinical research.

Let me conclude by saying it has been an honor to serve as President of the Society, which has allowed me to add a 40th building block to the foundation of progress created over the last four decades. As the Society is ever forward looking, the next 40 years for our field, and for the Society, are certain to unravel more mysteries, provide more extraordinary challenges, and advance our collective mission in ways that we can now only imagine.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. CAREW