

SfN Neuroscience Newsletter

Strategic Planning Initiative

by Fred H. Gage, President, Society for Neuroscience

As many of you know, the SFN Council decided at its Fall 2001 meeting to begin a strategic planning effort. Because of the many challenges and opportunities facing the Society, Council eagerly embraced the idea of taking the first comprehensive look at where we are and where we are going since our inception in 1970.

We began by retaining the consulting firm McManis & Monsalve Associates earlier this year to assist us in designing and facilitating the planning process. The work so far has included interviews with Society leaders, a member survey and a series of intensive planning meetings of the SFN Council to identify key strategic priorities based on membership input.

A major component of the planning process was designing, conducting and analyzing a survey of the entire SFN membership earlier this summer so that the views of members could be taken into consideration during the Council's strategy development deliberations at its August meeting. Please see the accompanying article summarizing the results of the member survey (page 3).

In early fall, all SFN members will have the opportunity to review and comment on a draft strategic plan. An open forum for additional member questions and comments will be held at the SFN Members' Business Meeting during the 2002 annual meeting. I strongly urge interested members to participate in these two important opportunities to comment and help shape the Society's future.

In their initial strategic situation assessment, the consultants conducted telephone interviews with more than 50 SFN leaders, including Council members, committee chairs, past presidents and members of the central office management team and staff. They identified areas of broad consensus, issues lacking consensus and recurring areas of concern.

I am happy to tell you that the process so far has helped to clarify a picture of a healthy organization that has accomplished much but is also faced with interesting and complex issues and opportunities for the future.

General areas of agreement from the interviews and survey include:

- Tremendous pride in accomplishments to date and optimism for the future.
- Expansion of educational and advocacy efforts.
- Better utilization of regional chapters.
- Continuing changes in online publishing that affect *The Journal of Neuroscience* in a variety of ways.
- Positive feelings about the scientific dynamism of the annual meeting, alongside concerns about its growing size.

The membership survey also found several areas of concern that our members want to be sure the Society addresses. They include: doing more for the development and future of the profession and our members, enhancing the value of SFN membership, increasing visibility on Capitol Hill and in the media, more effectively

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SFN Revamps Neuroscience 2002 Program

The membership spoke and SFN listened. The results of the membership survey illustrate that people love attending the Society for Neuroscience annual meetings because they provide attendees with the chance to meet with their colleagues, discuss the latest research breakthroughs, attend fascinating symposia and lectures and tour the poster floors.

To make the meeting easier to navigate, SFN revamped the 2002 *Program*, creating a lightweight, user-friendly portable packet of seven separate books that can be toted easily throughout the meeting. Advance registrants will receive the *Program* folder, which will arrive between late September and mid-October, which holds an Abstracts CD-ROM/Itinerary Planner and seven slim volumes. The first book contains all of the pertinent information for the meeting, including details about lectures and symposia, workshops and courses, special interest socials, resources for attendees and guests, travel and hotel information, shuttle schedules and facts about the Orlando area. This book also has the chronological and thematic lists of sessions, the exhibitor list and floor plans for the Orange County Convention Center, the Peabody Orlando and the Rosen Centre Hotel.

The second through sixth books divide the sessions by day and also contain highlights of the day's events. The last book contains the entire author index. The newly designed *Program* folder enables attendees to lighten their load and to breeze through the halls of the convention center with greater aplomb and less back pain.

Look Inside: Abstracts CD-ROM/Itinerary Planner

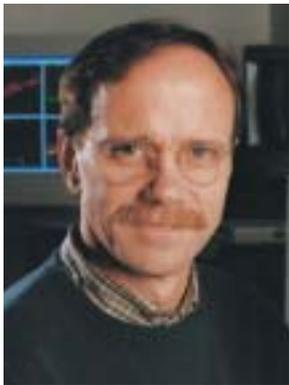
Your complimentary copy of the Abstracts CD-ROM/Itinerary Planner is enclosed in this issue of the *Neuroscience Newsletter*. The paper *Abstracts* volume will no longer be produced.

The CD-ROM contains the full text of abstracts and allows attendees to plan an itinerary for Neuroscience 2002. The electronic *Abstracts* will be available on the Society's Web site www.sfn.org, and a copy of the Abstracts CD-ROM/Itinerary Planner is also included in the 2002 *Program* packet; please feel free to pass extra copies of the CD-ROM on to your colleagues.

An on-site viewing room for previewing and using the CD-ROM will be available in Hall A1 of the convention center during the annual meeting. ■

STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE

continued from cover



Fred H. Gage

engaging the membership in education and advocacy activities, and ensuring the sustainability and excellence of *The Journal*.

Issues where more work needs to be done to forge a leadership consensus about how best to proceed include: the growing size of the annual meeting and how it could be made more manageable; how to approach the challenges and opportunities facing *The Journal of Neuroscience*; determining which public policy issues the Society should specifically address either

alone or in collaboration with other organizations; how to enhance the effectiveness of communication between SFN leadership and the membership; and how to increase regional chapter activity.

In reviewing these issues and opportunities, four strategic goals seem to be emerging that will help Council to organize the draft strategic plan to be put out for comment by the membership. Each of the suggested strategic goals will be accompanied by ideas for specific initiatives for the near future, as well as longer term strategies that will require continuing exploration and development. Each goal is briefly outlined in the paragraphs below with a few examples of the many ideas that have been generated for consideration by Council. The four goals are:

1. Promote continued development of the field of neuroscience, the integration of research and translation of discoveries to clinical treatments. Suggestions to help members better navigate and absorb the myriad activities at the annual meeting include holding an orientation session for first-time attendees on the first day. While there are continuing concerns about the size and manageability of the annual meeting, many members recommended caution about changes that could weaken the scientific dynamism of the meeting. The Society needs to continue to explore ways to build on the success of *The Journal of Neuroscience* as an independent, non-commercial scientific publication and identify measures that will enhance its scientific vitality and maintain its economic viability in the electronic age.

To encourage rapid translation of discoveries, ideas include sponsoring a Web cast forum on the current status, prospects and challenges facing expeditious application of research results to improve treatments. Another initiative might be to establish a speaker's bureau that could contribute to policymaker, patient and donor education programs sponsored by patient advocacy groups on the progress and promise of translational research. SFN also could give renewed attention to working with international neuroscience organizations to sponsor forums to develop a global neuroscience agenda and to strengthen the development of global neuroscience societies.

2. Provide improved professional development services and educational resources for neuroscience students and scientists at different stages of their careers. Suggestions include expanding the scope and variety of SFN-sponsored professional development and educational events for neuroscientists throughout the year. Among other new initiatives are sponsoring an enhanced job fair at the annual meeting and expanding the scope of career and professional development and job placement information available on

the SFN Web site for graduate and undergraduate students, their teachers and scientists. A working group might be charged with coordinating committee support for career information and professional development resources and preparing a multi-year action plan for expanding career development services.

3. Expand and improve general public information and education about neuroscience. Ideas include developing new teaching materials on neuroscience, both electronic and print, for K–12 students, teachers and the public, along with a major campaign to educate the public on the benefits of the use of animals in research. The Society might also consider seeking outside grant funding to expand the scale and scope of Brain Awareness Week programs to help educate the public about neuroscience, and establishing a Neuroscience Information Center to promote wider understanding of the field and the progress of research.

In addition to the four strategic goals, the Society is committed to developing new and better ways to conduct its business and ensure effective two-way communication between SFN leaders and members.

4. Strengthen SFN's role and influence in public affairs and advocacy. Possible new initiatives include improving the effectiveness of the Society's public affairs and advocacy activities, especially through strategic relationships and collaborative activities. Finding ways to strengthen the Society's relationship with NIH and the neuroscience institutes, as well as with advocacy groups that share our concern for basic research, is an important part of this goal area. The Society needs to actively identify ways to enhance its ability to inform policymakers effectively about the value of new scientific knowledge, the implications of research and the importance of continued government funding and support for scientific progress. In addition, SFN and the field may have reached a stage of maturity where the existing knowledge about neuroscience can help and contribute to the practical, legal, ethical and moral decisions that face society.

In addition to the four strategic goals above, the Society is committed to developing new and better ways to conduct its business and ensure effective two-way communication between SFN leaders and members. This might include strengthening the regional chapters, enhancing member and affiliate communications and opportunities for involvement in the work of SFN committees, developing effective strategic relationships with appropriate external partners, diversifying sources of revenue for the Society and ensuring needed expertise and organizational capacity within the central office. The Society might also explore ways to increase the value of regular SFN membership to retain current members and to attract new ones.

The above is a glimpse of some of the strategic planning ideas that Council will encourage you to comment on during the weeks leading up to the annual meeting in November. Your input and participation are vital to ensure that the Society goes forward with the support of its members and has a clear vision for how to address the challenges of the next decade. ■

Membership Survey Results

A key component of the strategic planning process involves finding out what Society for Neuroscience members want from their organization. From June into early July 2002, SFN conducted a comprehensive online survey to collect the views of our membership. The survey was designed by McManis & Monsalve, strategic planning consultants assisting the SFN Council. A grand total of 5,646 people completed the electronic survey, including members and students throughout North America, as well as members and students residing overseas. The results illuminate key issues to be addressed and will assist in shaping the Society's strategic vision, goals and priorities in the strategic plan that will be carried out over the next few years.

The survey's results confirmed that SFN members believe that the Society is embarking on the strategic planning process from a position of considerable strength. Nearly all respondents (more than 90 percent) rated the quality of the Society's two most important and visible initiatives, the annual meeting and *The Journal of Neuroscience*, as Very Good or Good, the two highest categories. More than 80 percent of respondents identified the annual meeting as a very important benefit of SFN membership. Two-thirds agreed that the size, programming and length of the meeting suit their needs, while one quarter of respondents contended that SFN should find ways to make the meeting more user-friendly and less cumbersome for attendees. A large number of respondents identified preserving and enhancing the quality of the annual meeting as the most important strategic initiative the Society should pursue. Respondents cited as important member benefits the online abstract submission process for the meeting, the complimentary online subscription to *The Journal of Neuroscience* and the SFN Web site. Members indicated their support for several suggestions to improve their experience with SFN. These include: strengthening communications between the Society's leadership and broader membership, increasing the career development information and services available through SFN, expanding general public information and education about neuroscience among young students and teachers through programs like Brain Awareness Week, and strengthening the Society's role in public affairs and advocacy.

Many who responded to the survey indicated that they would like to become more involved in SFN activities by serving on *ad hoc* and standing committees, the Council or by joining a regional chapter. Members similarly supported the idea that regional chapters should be strengthened to provide members with more opportunities to participate in the Society's public education and advocacy activities as well as professional development programs decisions.

The draft Strategic Plan will be posted on SFN's Web site during the fall so members will have an opportunity to provide feedback before Council takes final action in November. Members who wish to make their voices heard and take a more active role in the governance of the Society are encouraged to attend the SFN Members' Business Meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 6 from 6:00–7:00 pm in the Peabody Orlando, Plaza International Ballroom C. The agenda for 2002 includes a review of important Society initiatives and programs, including the draft Strategic Plan. Members will have the opportunity to express their opinions on matters related to the Society and direct questions to the Society's officers. There will also be an opportunity to discuss a proposed update to the Society's bylaws. In January, a referendum on the new set of bylaws will be sent to the entire voting membership.

The *Neuroscience Newsletter* will keep members posted on the planning and progress of the strategic initiatives. ■



Huda Akil, SFN President-elect

SFN President-Elect Huda Akil Discusses Membership Survey

NN: Nearly 20 percent of SFN members responded to the survey. Did this number surprise you?

Akil: We were very pleased with the response rate. It is unusually high for a survey of this type. It's clear that our members wanted to take the opportunity to share their thoughts about the Society with Council and the staff.

NN: The annual meeting and *The Journal* ranked highest in both quality and importance to our membership. What does that suggest about future directions for the Society?

Akil: The members were clearly telling us that while they think the Society does a good job with the annual meeting and *The Journal*, they expect the Society to continue to put those activities at the top of the priority list. At the same time, the results suggest that improved advocacy for governmental funding for neuroscience research, expanded public education programs and a renewed emphasis on supporting professional development are of increasing importance to our members.

NN: A strong majority of members (59 percent) agree that efforts should be directed at expanding educational programs, but members ranked Brain Awareness Week (BAW) programs in the mid-range in importance. What do you think accounts for this seeming contradiction?

Akil: The results may suggest that we have not made the clear case to our members about how BAW fits in to the Society's overall strategy on public education and outreach. Our chapters do an excellent job in the context of BAW, and we need to do as good a job of articulating the rationale for BAW and other educational programs as do the members who organize programs and activities.

But another striking set of responses that emerged from the survey indicated that our membership did want us to become the recognized or authoritative source of information on brain science both in the educational and government relations sectors. One interpretation of these combined messages may be that our membership wants a more systematic and coherent approach to our outreach effort. This is an important challenge, and Council will strive to propose better integrated strategies for achieving these sophisticated goals. Such an approach might well incorporate and strengthen currently existing programs, such as BAW. But it might also entail new initiatives that systematically use the depth of expertise of the membership in providing material aimed at both governmental and public targets.

NN: Members feel communication needs to improve between SFN leaders and membership.

Akil: It's always a challenge in any organization with a membership of 30,000 to maintain good communication between the leadership and the members. Council is very aware of this, and has been especially focused on using the strategic planning process as

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It's About the Science

A total of 13,343 abstracts will be presented at Neuroscience 2002 in Orlando.

Reminder, Poster Presenters!

Poster board dimensions: 5'10" (1.75 m) wide by 3'10" (1.15 m) high. Check out the Neuroscience 2002 Web site for presentation tips and a poster sample: www.sfn.org/AM2002. Click on Attendee/Speaker Resources. ■

Workshop Registration

Preregistration is required to participate in the Education and Committee on Neuroscience Literacy (CNL) Workshops. To register, please visit the SFN Web site: www.sfn.org/workshops. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Luann Fagerburg-Ruiz or Charyl Serago at the SFN central office. Phone: 202-462-6688. ■

Mentors, Guides Needed

Enthusiastic neuroscientists are needed to serve as partners for K–12 teachers attending the annual meeting. Also, guides are needed for local high school students to tour the exhibits and poster presentations. Please consider contributing your time to these mentoring activities. Visit www.sfn.org/workshops for more information. ■

Shuttle Service in Orlando

SFN will provide complimentary shuttle service between the Orange County Convention Center and official contracted hotels. Note that if you did not make your reservation via the SFN block, the shuttle will most likely not service your hotel. For a complete list of the shuttle routes and schedule, visit the SFN Web site: www.sfn.org/shuttle. If you have further questions, please contact Sharon Bowles at the Society office. Phone: 202-462-6688. ■

Orlando's Trolley

The I-RIDE Trolley service operates along the International Drive Resort Area from the Belz Factory to SeaWorld with stops at the convention center, Peabody Orlando and Rosen Centre Hotel along the way. For information about routes, schedules and fares please visit the I-RIDE Web site at: www.iridetrolley.com/. ■

Omega World Travel

Omega World Travel offers Neuroscience 2002 attendees specially-negotiated annual meeting airfare discounts to and from Orlando as well as car rental discounts that include 5–15% off daily and weekly rentals with free drop-offs to program cities, upgrades and more. Prefer to ride by rail to Neuroscience 2002? Call Omega to learn about Amtrak packages, schedules and fares. Omega World Travel may be reached via phone Monday–Friday, 10:00am–6:30pm to make reservations using the Society's meeting discount. Phone: 1-800-332-3012. ■

Disability & Special Needs

If you have a disability or a special need that may have an impact on your participation in the annual meeting, please contact Sharon Kerley Bowles. Phone: 202-462-6688. Fax: 202-462-2937. E-mail: sharon@sfn.org. The Society cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodations without prior notification of need.

For specialized services, please contact: Walker Medical and Mobility Products. Phone: 1-888-scooter. Web site: www.walkermobility.com. Scooters and wheelchairs of all sizes can be delivered to the convention center or hotels. Member of the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Inc. ■

Women's Careers in Neuroscience Mentoring Booth

The Society's Committee on the Development of Women's Careers in Neuroscience is pleased to announce a newly expanded mentoring program that will include an exhibit booth at the annual meeting. Booths 1831 and 1833 will feature a lounge area where mentors and mentees can meet throughout the meeting to discuss career goals. Visit www.sfn.org/mentoring for more information. ■

Symposia Proposals

The Program Committee will meet in February to assess the 2002 meeting and to begin planning for the 2003 meeting. If you wish to suggest changes in the theme and topics listings for 2003 symposia, please submit your proposal by Friday, January 10, so the committee can review them in February. You may pick up proposal forms during Neuroscience 2002 in the HQ Office/Programming in Hall A1 of the convention center, or access the form online at www.sfn.org/sympro. ■

Neuroscience 2002 Important Dates

- Sept. 23** Last day for students to make hotel reservations from the special student block.
- Oct. 1** Online advance registration deadline.
Last day to apply for membership prior to annual meeting registration.
- Oct. 2** Last day to make hotel reservations.
Deadline for education workshops registration.
- Oct. 8** On-site online annual meeting registration opens and continues through the annual meeting.
- Oct. 15** Last day to cancel annual meeting registration and receive refund.
- Oct. 25** Last day to cancel hotel reservations and receive deposit refund.
- Nov. 2** On-site registration opens at the convention center.

How To Give the Best Poster Presentation Ever

By Aric Argmon, SFN Member

Poster presentation has become the major medium for conveying cutting-edge information in scientific meetings. For example, participants in the Society for Neuroscience meeting are confronted with a mind-boggling assortment of nearly 14,000 posters during the 4.5 days of the convention. Even a well-prepared participant, who has perused the Society's itinerary-making software, will probably end up with a list of several dozen posters per day in his or her wish list. Of these, only a small number will be viewed at any depth due to the competing attractions of slide presentations, plenary talks, exhibitor booths and job interviews, not to mention the endless encounters with long-time-no-see colleagues.

All this makes the participant's available time and stamina the rate-limiting steps in the information transfer process. Posters which convey their message succinctly and clearly, are attractively presented and require little or no oral explanation will outcompete posters which demand considerable time and effort on behalf of the viewer. It is not my intention to re-enunciate guidelines for making good posters; these are well known. My intention here is to point out a little-discussed issue, that of presentation etiquette. After all, it is not enough to have a well-made poster—one also needs to know how to present it adequately, while showing consideration to the viewers and to fellow presenters alike.

Below are a few common pitfalls that speakers might try to avoid:

The Translucency Pitfall. It amounts to the simple but often forgotten biophysical fact that human tissue is not translucent, nor are most clothing fabrics. So, if you stand in front of your poster, enthusiastically explaining your latest patch clamp data to one or two of the attendees, please remember that there may be other visitors to your poster who prefer to read your poster rather than hear you narrate it (see Pitfall #2), and are in fact desperately trying to do so this very moment by arching their neck over your head. Please be considerate and narrate your poster while standing beside it, not in front of it, leaving your figures and text accessible to these other interested viewers. Of course, you should also be considerate to



Attendees discuss poster at annual meeting.

your neighboring presenters on both sides, and not stand in front of their posters either.

The Salesperson Pitfall. We have all been annoyed at one time or another by the overeager salesperson at the mall, who would insist on helping us when all we want is to be left alone to do our window shopping in peace and quiet. Why then do we do the same to the viewers of our posters? While some people may want to hear your narration, others will prefer to read your poster at their leisure, especially if you've followed the Good Poster Guidelines and your poster is clear, succinct and self-explanatory. Let them do so peacefully. At most, you may offer a "Please let me know if you need any help" in their direction.

The Overbearing Presenter Pitfall. One reason people opt to ask for a narration, rather than read the poster themselves, is that your poster is not clear, succinct and self-explanatory; you can then compensate somewhat for your poorly prepared poster by giving them a clear and succinct verbal presentation. However, if it takes them as much or more time to listen to your presentation as it would take them to view your poster on their own, they've gained nothing. Remember that they have eight other posters to catch in the next forty minutes, so be considerate and do not give them your twenty-minute talk; give them your five-minute talk, and then elaborate further only if asked.

Following these three golden rules will ensure positive poster presentation experiences for attendees and presenters. ■

Speaker Resources

- A limited number of 35mm slide viewers and computers will be available in Room 209C of the convention center for speakers to check their media.
- Software available in each session room: PowerPoint 2002, Adobe Acrobat (pdf file based) and Corel Draw 10.
- Authors using computer projection are urged to bring their media on a Windows-readable ZIP disk, CD-ROM, or floppy disk.
- Authors using their own laptops MUST have a VGA 15 pin HD Female video output cable.
- Slides should be duplicates, not originals. Originals should be kept in a safe place in case of loss or damage.

Member Column: Submissions

Society for Neuroscience members made their voices heard in the membership survey. Now you can share your sentiments with fellow colleagues on the Member Column page. Submit a column about the annual meeting, the direction the Society should be taking, your views on advocacy or your stand on neuroscience education and outreach projects.

If you have an idea for a column, please contact Mary McComb for further details: mary@sfn.org.

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an opportunity to learn more about the members' priorities, and to share its sense of what important opportunities are out there for the Society and for the field of neuroscience. There is no magic solution—good communication requires constant attention, and Council has made clear that maintaining open channels of communication with the members is a priority. The chapters have an important role to play here, and it is no accident that Council spends a lot of time discussing how to strengthen and encourage chapters.

NN: Do you find the results of the survey positive in terms of the future of the Society?

Akil: Very much so. SFN members feel a strong bond with the Society, a real sense of ownership. Indeed, many members do serve the Society in a variety of ways, some committing substantial amounts of their time to it. Many of the respondents expressed a strong interest in active service within the Society. That kind of committed membership bodes well for the Society's future, and for our ability to continue to organize the kind of vital and dynamic venues for the sharing of science that is the Society's hallmark. ■

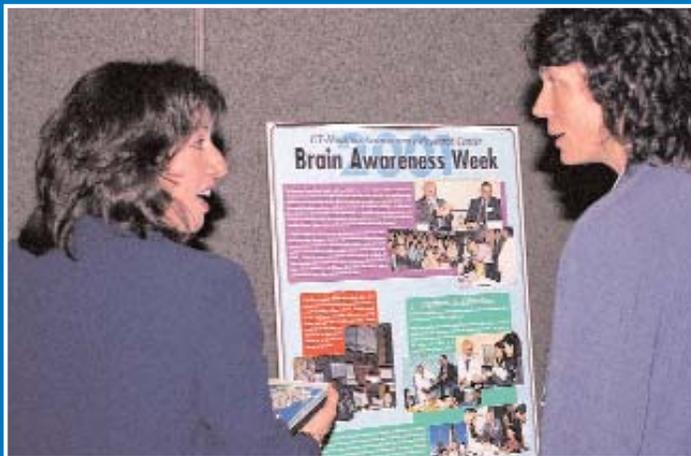
Brain Facts Available Now

Brain Facts: A Primer on the Brain and Nervous System is newly revised and available to the public. The updated edition of *Brain Facts* provides readers with the latest research developments in the fields of sleep, stress, movement, learning and memory, aging, treatments for neurological disorders, new diagnostic methods and potential therapies. *Brain Facts* also boasts beautiful full-color illustrations of the brain, nervous system and spinal cord.

High school students and teachers, journalists and members of the lay public rely on *Brain Facts* for background information and detailed graphics about sensation and perception and nervous system structure. *Brain Facts* is used as the key text of and basis for "Brain Bees" that are held in locations around the globe during Brain Awareness Week in March of each year.

Members of the public embrace *Brain Facts* for its easy-to-read text and detailed descriptions of complex nervous system functions. *Brain Facts* makes a wonderful gift for those interested in neuroscience, teachers who desire clear illustrations for teaching complex concepts and students who want to know more about the brain, spinal cord and nervous system. *Brain Facts* can be downloaded from the Society's Web site: www.sfn.org/brainfacts. To order a free copy please send an e-mail to brainfacts@sfn.org. ■

Join us for the **Brain Awareness Week Campaign Meeting!**



**Share your ideas and concerns
with your colleagues.**

**Talk about the direction of
the campaign.**

**Learn from the experiences
of other organizers.**

Sunday, November 3 Orange County Convention Center Room 310 4:30 to 6:00 pm

NIDCR and Pain Research

by Lawrence Tabak, NIDCR Director



Lawrence Tabak

For the past five decades, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) has been one of the key supporters of pain research at NIH. Its scientists and grantees have made important contributions to define the basic neurocircuitry of pain as well as translate this understanding into improved treatments that benefit millions of Americans.

The NIDCR recognizes that a unique opportunity now exists, with the emergence of genomic, proteomic and other powerful information-generating technologies, to define in greater detail the genetic and molecular basis of pain. This basic research will serve as the pipeline for new strategies in pain management, allowing future clinicians to more selectively and efficiently control the pain process. The NIDCR actively welcomes innovative ideas from the neuroscience community to assist the Institute in its many current areas of pain research.

Tissue Innervation and Neurophysiology

The NIDCR supports basic and translational research on the neurophysiology and innervation of the orofacial tissues. Of particular interest to the Institute are investigations on:

- The peripheral and central sensitization of nociceptors, especially stimuli or lesions known to induce orofacial pain.
- Neuroplasticity in dental neurons.
- Improved measures of chemosensory, tactile, kinesthetics or proprioceptive mechanisms in craniofacial structures.
- Improved *in vitro* and animal models for assessing pathobiological changes in the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) and muscles of mastication and possibly facial expression.
- The mechanisms used by the nervous system to detect and regulate the functional and dysfunctional state of the orofacial tissues.
- The role of the nervous system in regulating jaw function in both health and disease.
- Neurotransmitters, neuromodulators and intercellular and intracellular messengers involved in nociception, plasticity and neuroregeneration.
- The possible contributions of central pathways to the development and modulation of trigeminal neuropathic pain.
- Elucidation of biochemical and electrophysiological mechanisms controlling jaw function.

Neuropathies, TMJD and Orofacial Pain

The NIDCR supports neurobiological research on the pathogenesis of pain in craniofacial tissues, including the TMJ and masticatory muscles. The research focuses on the molecular or physiological variables associated with chronic and/or persistent temporomandibular muscle and joint disorder (TMJD) pain, as well as the environmental and genetic factors that increase the risk of these conditions. Animal or human models of chronic pain conditions are of special interest.

Biomarkers, Diagnostics/Prognostics

The NIDCR has also made a push to develop biomarkers for neuropathic or neurodegenerative conditions that affect the oral-craniofacial region, including the TMJ. Of major interest are genomic and proteomic expression analyses to compare the characteristics of normal and diseased TMJ tissue. The Institute is also interested in developing new imaging technologies to evaluate the physiology and treatment of TMJDs.

Basic research will serve as the pipeline for new strategies in pain management, allowing future clinicians to more selectively and efficiently control the pain process.

Therapeutics

The Institute also supports the development of novel pharmacological approaches to control orofacial pain, especially that associated with TMJDs. Research is encouraged to elucidate the mechanism(s) of action of opioids in orofacial pain. The NIDCR also supports investigations on the design and development of controlled release delivery systems, involving both conventional and new drugs, at specific target sites to alleviate pain and inflammation of the TMJ.

NIDCR Pain Research at NIH

The NIDCR operates the pain and neurosensory mechanisms branch on the NIH campus in Bethesda. Scientists operate a translational pain research program that targets molecular-genetic mechanisms that contribute to the development of pain chronicity. The program also actively develops novel interventions to manage chronic pain, with an emphasis on the orofacial region. Branch staff are key contributors in the NIH Pain Consortium, an important special interest group within the NIH intramural research community.

Additional Research Opportunity

The NIDCR is in the planning stages of encouraging research to develop TMJD as a model to study the pathobiology of complex diseases. An announcement should be made by the end of the year. For more information, please visit: www.nidcr.nih.gov/research/clearances.asp. ■

Rett Syndrome: A Time To Talk, A Time To Plan

By Kathy Hunter, Founder and President, International Rett Syndrome Association

What do Julia Roberts, the Oscar-winning actress, and Huda Zoghbi, the preeminent molecular geneticist from Baylor College of Medicine, have in common with the International Rett Syndrome Association (IRSA)? They are united in passionately trying to cure this devastating neurodevelopmental disorder.

What Is Rett Syndrome?

Rett Syndrome (RS) affects approximately 1 in 10,000 to 15,000 live female births. The majority of cases are caused by a spontaneous genetic mutation of the MECP2 gene, located on the X-chromosome. Zoghbi, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, and her collaborators discovered the mutation in the late summer of 1999, with funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the IRSA. MECP2 encodes the methyl-CpG-binding protein 2, which is thought to be involved in transcriptional control. Girls with RS appear to develop normally during early infancy, but usually enter a period of regression beginning their second year. They then develop some autistic traits and lose acquired speech and purposeful hand use, which is replaced by stereotyped hand movements such as handwringing or handwashing. About half develop seizures and breathing abnormalities and most develop scoliosis.



Kathy Hunter advocates for research funds in Washington.

One of the unexpected results of Rett research has been the discovery that MECP2 underlies a host of disorders never suspected to be related to RS. MECP2 mutations have been identified in male children with schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, and some forms of autism as well as those with severe mental retardation associated with movement disorders. Some women with very mild learning disabilities have also been found to carry MECP2 mutations. Understanding Rett syndrome could advance our understanding of all these diseases.

A Personal Crusade

Eighteen years ago after her daughter, Stacie, was the first child diagnosed with RS in the United States, Kathy Hunter founded the IRSA. Since then, this nonprofit organization has grown into a powerful entity with a three-pronged mission: research, public awareness and family support. IRSA now manages a mailing list of over 15,000.

On May 9th of this year, the IRSA went to Congress with Julia Roberts to request that legislators increase funding for RS and related



Katie Laufer and Bailey Pearce joined the March on Washington, D.C.

disorders at the NIH during the next fiscal funding year. Since 1986, IRSA's lobbying efforts have led to nearly \$35 million in funds to study Rett syndrome. Ms. Roberts testified because her young friend, Abigail Brodsky, who had Rett syndrome, passed away last summer at 10 years of age from RS complications.

Zoghbi also has had a very personal commitment to solving the puzzle of RS. Her introduction to the illness came in 1983 when she met an engaging little girl who wrung her hands constantly and had stopped talking and walking. Fascinated by this little girl and her unique neurological picture, Zoghbi became hooked on finding the cause, and hopefully a cure, for RS. It took 16 long years to find the cause, and the ramifications of this discovery have been enormous. "We just hope finding a treatment won't take quite so long," says Zoghbi. "But there's an important lesson here. The benefits of basic research are many and they come in ways that no one can predict. We need NIH support to keep making discoveries that will benefit people, now or 20 years from now."

A Time To Talk, A Time To Plan

On the heels of such a spectacular year, including a successful advocacy day with IRSA and Roberts in Congress and Zoghbi's new mouse model, **the International Rett Syndrome Association is pleased to host a reception next month in Orlando at the SFN meeting.** It will be a wonderful time and opportunity for newcomers to Rett research to become up close and personal with IRSA. For more information, call IRSA at 1-800-818-RETT or visit the Web site at www.rettysyndrome.org. ■

Inform SFN Members about Your Organization

The *Neuroscience Newsletter* Advocacy Column page provides an excellent venue to communicate your association's mission, agenda and current projects to Society for Neuroscience members. If you would like to submit an update about your organization, please contact Editorial Services at newsletter@sfn.org.

McKnight Awards Invitation

The McKnight Endowment Fund for Neuroscience supports innovative research designed to bring science closer to the day when diseases of the brain can be accurately diagnosed, prevented and treated.

Scholar Awards

The McKnight Endowment Fund for Neuroscience invites applications for the 2003 McKnight Scholar Awards. These awards were established to encourage emerging neuroscientists to focus on disorders of learning and memory. Applicants for the 2003 McKnight Scholar Awards must demonstrate interest in solving important problems in relevant areas of neuroscience, including the translation of basic research to clinical neuroscience. Awards are given to exceptional young scientists who hold the MD and/or PhD degree and who are in the early stages of establishing an independent laboratory and research career. Traditionally, successful candidates have held faculty positions for at least one year. For the names of previous recipients and their projects, see www.mcknight.org/neuroscience. Up to six McKnight Scholars each will receive three years of support, beginning July 1, 2003.

Amount and Purpose of Support

Each McKnight Scholar will receive \$75,000 annually in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Funds may be used in any way that will facilitate development of the Scholar's research program, but not for indirect costs.

To Apply

For application forms and guidelines, please visit our Web site at www.mcknight.org/neuroscience, or e-mail, call or write the office of The McKnight Endowment Fund for Neuroscience. Completed applications must arrive no later than January 2, 2003 at the following address: The McKnight Endowment Fund for Neuroscience, 600 TCF Tower, 121 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402. E-mail: info@mcknight.org.

Join the FUN at Neuroscience 2002

The Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience (FUN) invites Neuroscience 2002 attendees to participate in fun-filled activities including undergraduate poster displays, award ceremonies for the Educator of the Year and student travel awards and a celebratory launch of the new flagship publication—*The Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education* (JUNE).

All undergraduates presenting posters at Neuroscience 2002 in Orlando are invited to display their posters at FUN's Poster Session & Social on Monday, November 4 from 6:30–8:30pm in Room 310 of the Orange County Convention Center. This annual event provides an excellent mechanism for recognizing the efforts of all the undergraduate students in attendance at the annual meeting, while providing attendees a venue to socialize and exchange ideas with others concerned with undergraduate research and education. After the undergraduates' poster presentations we will announce the winners of the FUN Travel Awards, which are presented for outstanding undergraduate research. To reserve space for a poster, undergraduate students should contact Dr. Karen Parfitt via e-mail: kparfitt@pomona.edu.

Technological Innovations Awards

The McKnight Endowment Fund invites letters of intent for the 2003 McKnight Technological Innovations in Neuroscience Awards. Up to four awards are made annually, each providing \$100,000 a year for two years.

Use of Award Fund

These awards encourage and support scientists working on the development of novel and creative approaches to understanding brain function. The Endowment Fund is especially interested in how technology may be used or adapted to monitor, manipulate, analyze or model brain function at any level, from the molecular to the entire organism. The program seeks to advance and enlarge the range of technologies available to the neurosciences and does not support research based primarily on existing techniques. A goal of the technology awards is to also foster collaboration between the neurosciences and other disciplines. Collaborative and cross-disciplinary applications are invited. For descriptions of previous awards, visit our Web site at www.mcknight.org/neuroscience.

To Apply

To apply, submit a two-page letter of intent, summarizing the project and describing how the technology involved will enrich the neurosciences and become accessible to other research in the field. The deadline for letters of intent is December 1, 2002. Funding begins August 1, 2003. Letters should not exceed two pages. Please include the mailing and e-mail addresses of the principal investigators and a title for the project. Please send letters of intent to the following address: McKnight Technological Innovations in Neuroscience Awards, The McKnight Endowment Fund for Neuroscience, 600 TCF Tower, 121 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402.

Selection Committee: Lubert Stryer (Chair), Catherine Dulac, Stephen Heinemann, Larry Katz, Anthony Movshon, David Tank, Robert Wurtz. ■

The organization's annual business meeting will be held Monday, November 4 at 7:00am in the convention center. A continental breakfast will be available. Attendance is open to all individuals with an interest in undergraduate neuroscience. For further information or to discuss potential agenda items, contact FUN President Eric Wiertelak via e-mail: wiertelak@macalester.edu.

As in previous years, the FUN booth will be open throughout the SFN meeting. Help FUN bring outstanding undergraduate researchers to the SFN meeting by buying t-shirts and other merchandise. Stop by to chat with FUN members and learn about what FUN does—even join the organization on the spot.

FUN is the international nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting research and education in neuroscience at the undergraduate level. Individuals interested in membership are encouraged to join FUN, nominate deserving students for the travel award and deserving faculty for recognition, and become involved in the activities of the society! For FUN information or to access the FUN Travel Award application and/or register for a poster presentation, visit the society Web site at www.funfaculty.org. Contact: s FUN Secretary Jean Hardwick, jhardwick@ithaca.edu or FUN President Eric Wiertelak, wiertelak@macalester.edu. ■

East Carolina University: Today and Tomorrow

The Eastern Carolina Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience holds a symposium every year just preceding the Society for Neuroscience annual meeting. The first symposium was held for the purpose of bringing together the faculty across the university that identified themselves as neuroscientists. The symposia that followed have allowed us to maintain a highly visible neuroscience presence on the campus and provide a venue for our diverse faculty to maintain contact and develop educational as well as research collaborations. The symposia also serve to provide faculty, students and postdoctoral research associates an opportunity to hone their skills as presenters and to improve their poster presentations through discussion and critique with our senior and established investigators.

Today the Neuroscience group is made up of approximately 40 faculty from 4 schools and 7 departments. These faculty have collaborated in developing a Interdisciplinary BS/BA Neuroscience program and an interdisciplinary PhD neuroscience tract within the Interdisciplinary Program in the biological sciences.

This year's symposium, a work in progress, will feature a keynote speaker of national and international reputation. We are thankful to the Society for Neuroscience's Grass Foundation Traveling Scientist Program that administers the funding of the keynote speaker. Last year's symposium included 14 oral and 9 poster presentations of work done in collaboration with researchers from East Carolina University and universities from around the United States and several from Europe. In 2001, the Society for Neuroscience Grass Foundation Traveling Scientist Program provided funding for a visit of internationally known neuroscientist Dr. Larry Squire from UCSD who gave the keynote lecture on the memory systems of the brain. The immense success of last year's program was in

large part attributed to the presence of Dr. Squire. This year Dr. Barry Kaplan of the NIMH will deliver the keynote address Wednesday, Oct. 23 at the Greenville Hilton Hotel, Greenville, NC. We look forward to a similar response from the neuroscience community of eastern North Carolina this year.

For further information about the Eastern North Carolina Chapter and its programs visit our Web site at www.ecu.edu/neuroscience. Contacts: Dr. Edward M. Lieberman, Professor of Physiology, The Brody School of Medicine, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858. Phone: 252-816 2771, Fax: 252-816-3460, E-mail: lieberman@mail.ecu.edu or Dr. Larry Means, Professor of Psychology, Rawl 133, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858. Phone: 252 328 6209, E-mail: meansl@mail.ecu.edu. ■

Chapter Members & Leaders: Mark Your Calendars!

Remember to attend the SFN Chapters/Eli Lilly Graduate Student Travel Awards Ceremony on Monday, Nov. 4 from 7:00–8:00pm at the Peabody Orlando in Florida Ballroom I. The SFN Chapters/Eli Lilly Graduate Student Travel Awards support graduate student travel to the annual meeting by providing registration fees and \$500 in travel expenses for outstanding graduate students nominated by their local chapters. Join us as we honor the recipients of these awards. Recipients of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Postdoctoral Travel Awards will also be recognized. Chapter representatives are strongly encouraged to attend this event. RSVP required. If you would like to attend please contact Greg Willoughby at greg@sfn.org. ■

FENS Forum Enjoys Sound Success

by Gaetano Di Chiara, FENS President 2000-02

The biannual meeting of the Federation of the European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) took place on July 13–17, 2002 in Paris at the Palais de Congrès—the largest conference center in France. It was hosted by the local Société Française de Neurosciences and organized by a local committee chaired by Dominique Poulain. Organizers noted that increased meeting attendance over the years, with this conference boasting 5,750 delegates and exhibitors, indicates that interest for a European neuroscience meeting is steadily increasing.

The meeting opened and closed, respectively, with Presidential Lectures by E. Kandel and by T.W. Robbins. The scientific program was selected by a committee and chaired by F. Lopez da Silva. It included seven plenary lectures, seven special lectures, 56 symposia and seven workshops. The poster sessions held 3,500 presentations. As many as 40 neuroscientists from North America participated as lecture and symposium speakers. The Forum was attended with exceeding interest and one could almost feel, as Pierre Magistretti said, the great amount of energy and enthusiasm put by participants into the meeting.

During the past two years other neuroscience societies have joined FENS, including a society from Russia. Among FENS's activities, two are of particular relevance: the organization of Neuroscience Schools (Chair, Sigi Huck) and the *European Journal of Neuroscience* (Editor-in-chief, Barry Everitt). During the Forum the FENS Council elected Tamas Freund (Hungary) as president-elect and has confirmed for another turn Monica Di Luca (Italy) as secretary general. Giorgio Innocenti (Sweden) and Robert Nitsch (Germany) had already been elected as chair of the school committee and treasurer, respectively.

The Forum has also served as an occasion for strengthening the relationships between FENS and the Society for Neuroscience (SFN) and implementing joint action on issues of common interest. Thus the FENS executive committee met during the Forum with the SFN president and executive director to discuss common strategies on ethical, educational and funding issues. These talks will continue on a regular basis.

The next Forum will take place in Lisbon on July 10, 2004. Organizers are confident that, under the incoming FENS President Pierre Magistretti, the Paris success will be renewed in Lisbon. Among the many people who have helped to make FENS grow during the last two years, Monica Di Luca, Dominique Poulain, Helmuth Kettenmann and Sigi Huck deserve special thanks. ■

NIH Events At Neuroscience 2002

NINDS to Sponsor Training and Career Development Workshop

Attention Graduate Students, Postdoctoral Fellows and Early-to-Mid-Career Faculty! As you fill in your calendars for Neuroscience 2002, here is a session you won't want to miss. Fifteen Institutes, Centers and Offices from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) will conduct a workshop to answer your research funding questions and to give you helpful hints and tips on navigating the vast array of NIH and NSF research training and career development programs.

The workshop "NIH and NSF Funding for Your Research Training and Career Development" is sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) in collaboration with other NIH components and the NSF. It will be held on Saturday, November 2 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm in Room 110B of the Orange County Convention Center. This represents a change from previous years when the workshop was held on Monday—so don't miss it!

The goal of the session is to stimulate interest in both basic and clinical neuroscience research by encouraging graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and early-to-mid-career scientists to apply for research training and career development awards. At the workshop, representatives from the NIH and NSF will provide information and guidance on neuroscience research training and career development funding opportunities. Special focus will be given to career development issues for minority students and fellows.

Participating NIH components include:

- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)
- National Institute on Aging (NIA)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- National Eye Institute (NEI)

- National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)
- Center for Scientific Review (CSR)
- Office of Education, Office of the Director, NIH

The workshop will provide information about the NIH National Research Service Award (NRSA) programs, which support predoctoral and postdoctoral research training at nonprofit private or public institutions through training grants and individual fellowships. Workshop representatives will also describe the types and length of fellowships and training grants available to predoctoral and postdoctoral students.

In addition, NIH representatives will discuss career development awards including the K01, Mentored Research Scientist Development Awards; the K02, Independent Scientist Award; the K08, Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award; the K23, Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award; the K24, Midcareer Investigator Award in Patient-Oriented Research and the K25, Mentored Quantitative Research Career Development Award. These awards provide support for individuals who demonstrate outstanding potential for academic research careers. The discussants will describe the general length of the awards and the different career stages during which the awards are made.

Representatives from the NSF will be on hand to discuss training and career development mechanisms and to give program descriptions of the funding and training opportunities provided by their agency. Workshop attendees can meet one-on-one with representatives from the participating agencies and institutes as part of the workshop.

For additional information contact Dr. Henry Khachaturian, Research Training and Career Development Officer, NINDS, NIH, Neuroscience Center, 6001 Executive Blvd., Room 2154, Bethesda, Maryland 20892, telephone: (301) 496-4188, fax: (301) 594-5929, e-mail: hk11b@nih.gov. ■

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2002 SFN MEMBERS' BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, November 6
6:00–7:00pm
Peabody Orlando Hotel
Plaza International Ballroom C

- I. Call to Order – F. H. Gage, President
- II. Approval of 2001 Business Meeting Minutes – C. A. Barnes, Secretary
- III. Treasurer's Report – S. G. Amara, Treasurer
- IV. Update on *The Journal of Neuroscience*/Introduction of Incoming Editor-in-Chief – F. H. Gage

- V. Discussion of Proposed Bylaws Revision – C. M. Gall,
To View the Proposed Revision: www.sfn.org/bylaws*
- VI. Discussion of DRAFT Strategic Plan – F. H. Gage
To View the SFN Draft: www.sfn.org/strategicplan*
- VII. Recognition of Outgoing and Incoming Officers, Councilors
and Chairpersons – F. H. Gage
- VIII. F. H. Gage Turns Presidency over to H. Akil
- IX. New Business – H. Akil, President
- X. Adjournment

* These documents will be available for viewing by the end of September.