



TERATOLOGY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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resident's Message

Dear Colleagues:

Despite my failure to change the name of the Society at the Banquet (those who were there know what I am talking about), this year's meeting was a solid success. A successful meeting requires the input of a very large number of people, including the Program Committee of **Sid Hunter, Ida Smoak, Paul Foster, Lamont Bryant** and **Tina Chambers**. Two other committees played key roles, Education, chaired by **JoLynda Jones**, and Student Affairs, chaired by **Kit Keller**. The organizers of the symposia (**Mike Collins, Michael Katz, Bill Slikker, Karen Augustine, Deb Hansen, Elizabeth Yetley, Sid Hunter, Ken Jones** and **Harpal Buttar**) and workshops (**David Wise, Rakesh Dixit, Carole Kimmel, Deborah Rice, Bob Brent, Narsingh Agnish** and **Tony Scialli**) also deserve a heart felt thank you. Those of you who stayed for the Genomics Satellite meeting organized by **Phil Mirkes** received a special treat in hearing a rather intense day and a half discourse on the way biological science is changing in the era of the genome. (A summary of the Genomics meeting will be in a future issue of the journal.) Of course there are a number of other committees that made contributions to the meeting, and a number of people are rotating off after solid tours of duties. I wish space would allow me to acknowledge all of you.

Special acknowledgement is due to our Executive Director, **Tonia Masson**, and our Meetings Manager, **Clarissa Wilson** who worked especially hard behind the scenes to manage crises and keep the hotel from busting our budget on a number of issues. Having watched Clarissa deal with contracts and hotel staff, I am really glad she is on our side and not theirs (and I am happy to report that she has fully recovered from her distaste of South Florida drinking water).

A note of sincere thanks goes to **George Daston**, our outgoing President. George has worked exceptionally hard over the past number of years to make the Society run more professionally and efficiently. There is no doubt that our house is in better shape because of his efforts, and I am very thankful to take the reins in a period of relative quiescence after several years of turmoil. A few of his decisions were controversial, but they turned out to be the tonic we needed.

The last group that warrants acknowledgement is the attendees at the meeting. It was your presentations and participation in the sessions and committees that brought the scientific component to the meeting that is our lifeblood. A strong, vibrant scientific program is the only way we will grow our membership, attendance and impact—we cannot do that without you.

Importantly, we attained all of the contractual obligations that have made us return to venues in less than optimal conditions over the past two years, and we are now free to pursue the strategic plan set forth several years ago. Council has decided to allocate a portion of the profits from this year's meeting to specifically reduce the registration cost of next year's meeting. That meeting will be in a major city (Montreal) for the first time in years, and I am very optimistic that we will begin to witness an increase in attendance and submitted abstracts. The Society is headed in the right direction, let us all work together to see that that continues.

I also wish to extend congratulations to the **Finnell** lab for having received the first Wilson Publication Award, to **Kim Brannen** for receiving the Taubeneck Award, to **Antonio Machado** and **Robert Vinson** for receiving the Wilson Student Presentation Award, and to **Martha Werler** for receiving the F. Clarke Fraser New Investigator Award. One thing I will be working on this year is to have an "Awards" section on our Web site that will feature criteria and eligibility for our Society Awards, together with a listing of past recipients so that we can both celebrate their success and know how to promote our members for these awards. Congratulations also go to **Bill Slikker**, our new Vice-President Elect, **Melissa Tassinari**, the new Councilor and to **George Dearlove**, our new Secretary. Of course that means we had to watch **Bob Seegmiller** depart council, who will be remembered for doggedly pursuing those electronic reports and for moving us into the era of electronic newsletter publishing.

What is in the future?

Planning for next year's Annual Meeting is already well underway (see **Jan Friedman's** article in this issue), the site has been selected for 2002 (Phoenix) and we are actively pursuing a venue for 2003 either in the northeastern or middle portions of the States. Our partnering will continue with NBTS, and I am particularly pleased with having OTIS remain associated with our meeting – both parties are experiencing the benefits.

A key activity this year will be a continuation of the dialogue that we have begun with Wiley-Liss regarding the publication of our journal. Many of you have expressed views on how to improve both the visibility of the journal and the relationship of the publisher to the Society. Over the past several months, the pace of the discussion has increased substantially, and I am optimistic that significant changes will be occurring in the future with the journal and with the publisher. I want to thank **Nancy Olsen**, our liaison with Wiley Liss, for her role in this process. Nancy provided a pleasant addition to the Student Travel Award recipients as she allowed George Clemens and myself to pick out about 30 textbooks that students were able to take home with them.

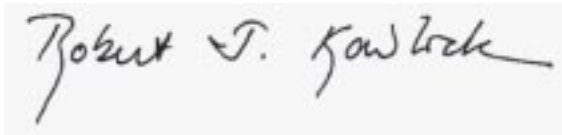
Membership is one of the last items identified in our strategic planning process that needs to be addressed. Our membership count appears to be about level over the past several years, with new members about equaling those that drop out. I have asked new Council member **Melissa Tassinari** to gather data about our attrition and retention rates (who are we losing and why), and try to identify which segment(s) of birth defect researchers we need to strive harder to enfranchise. Once we have some information on demographics and dynamics of membership, we can begin to benchmark progress to recruiting and retaining members. While on the Strategic Plan issues, I should note that I have been invited to attend the Council Meeting of the European Teratology Society in September and share our strategic planning process and some of the results that we have seen occur with them. Look for a report in the next newsletter.

Another activity that I would like to promote is the outputs of the Public Affairs Committee that is chaired by **Ken Jones**. This past year, the PAC implemented a format by which the committee can provide rapid comment on controversial papers in *Teratology*. I would like to see the Society develop a process of having a press release available for these topics, as well as for the release of the Position Papers that the committee puts so much time and energy into. If we are to become more widely known for our mission of education, we need to develop better processes for communicating our outputs to the scientific community, the public and the media.

Finally, we continue to participate in the FASEB activities. **Tom Flynn** attended a FASEB Workshop on Animal Welfare in August, and **Tom Knudsen** and **John DeSesso** will be attending the Consensus Conference on Research Funding in December. With time and experience, we are beginning to appreciate how best we can influence the activities of FASEB to promote research into the causes of birth defects.

All in all, I believe we are in reasonably sound shape, and I look forward to my year of serving you as President of the Teratology Society.

Regards,



Robert Kavlock, Ph.D.
2000-2001 President



First Annual James G. Wilson Publication Award - Best Paper in Teratology Awarded to Dr. Richard Finnell and Co-workers

The Publication Committee selected the award winning article entitled "Ribonucleotide Reductase Subunit R1: A Gene Conferring Sensitivity to Valproic Acid-Induced Neural Tube Defects in Mice" by J.C. Craig, G.D. Bennett, R.C. Miranda, S.A. Mackler and R. H. Finnell (*Teratology* 61:305-313; 2000). The best paper for 1999-2000 was selected from 38 excellent manuscripts nominated by the Section Editors and Editor-in-Chief of *Teratology*. The article was selected by the Publication Committee based on its originality, approach and impact and was focused on mechanisms of dysmorphogenesis and development susceptibility.

The inaugural ceremony for the presentation of the James G. Wilson Publication Award was held at our Annual Teratology Meeting in Palm Beach. Dr. G. D. Bennett presented the essence of the winning publication. Mrs. James G. Wilson graciously agreed to present the First Annual Wilson Publication Award and provided some of her impressions of the Society. Mrs. Wilson, a tireless supporter of the Society, provided the generous resources for this prestigious award through the James G. Wilson Foundation.

The Publication Committee (Karen Augustine, Tom Kwasigroch, Rochelle Tyl, Phil Mirkes, Bernard Schwetz and William Slikker, Chairperson) with input from members of Council, and Drs. Scott, Fantel and Holmes developed the description and procedures for the Wilson Publication Award. The new award was advertised in the *Teratology* newsletter, the journal *Teratology* and several other Wiley journals. Finally, The Editor and the Section Editors made 38 nominations and the Publication Committee selected the 1999-2000 winner of the Wilson Publication Award based on originality, approach and impact.

The James G. Wilson Publication Award is presented for the best paper published in *Teratology* on an annual basis. The dual purpose of the award is to provide recognition to the authors of the best paper and to encourage authors trained in various disciplines to submit high quality manuscripts to *Teratology*. The *Teratology* Section Editors and Editor-in-Chief nominate manuscripts and the Publication Committee selects the best paper from nominated articles accepted by or published in *Teratology* in the preceding year. The award amount is \$1,500. The winner is invited to present the paper at the Annual Meeting of the Teratology Society. Travel costs, registration fee and funding for a one-year membership in the Society are included for qualified applicants. Submit your best manuscript and a letter noting that you would like to be considered for the James G. Wilson Publication Award. The 2000-2001 recipient will be recognized during the 2001 Annual Meeting in Montreal.



Student Travel Awards

The following students received Travel Awards to attend the 40th Annual Meeting at The Breakers. Congratulations!

Kimberly Brannen —
Marie Taubeneck Award

Jeff Charlap

Christopher Cifarelli

Ron Donahue

Bill Dunty, Jr.

Jason Hansen

Louise Lanoue

Elise Lewis —

Eli Lilly and Company Award

Antonio Machado — Wilson Award

Norbert Makori

Elena Menegola

Mike O'Hara

Valerie Shultz

Donna Soleman — Wetzel
Award

Dana Tarka

Robert Vinson — Wilson Award

Judith Wubah

Sarah Yacobi



Teratology 2001 in Montréal:

Mark Your Calendar Now!

Next year's Teratology Society Annual Meeting will be held from Saturday, 23 June, through Thursday, 28 June at Le Centre Sheraton Hotel ([click here for web site](#)) in beautiful Montreal, Canada. The meeting will be preceded by another stimulating Education Course and will include symposia on stem cells in development, male-mediated developmental toxicity, and recent FDA initiatives in the area of teratology. There will be joint symposia with the Neurobehavioral Teratology Society on genetic pathways in neurodevelopmental abnormalities and with the Organization of Teratogen Information Services on teratogenic effects of obstetrical procedures. In addition, workshops are being planned on recent advances in clinical teratology, genomic approaches to understanding embryogenesis, and intracellular redox status and control of transcription. Plan to submit your most exciting new work for the student plenary session, platform sessions, or poster sessions.

Montreal is a wonderful place in the summer. It is one of the oldest and most interesting cities in North America. [Check it out at this web site](#). The meeting schedule will leave most evenings free, so there will be an opportunity to take in some great music at The [Montreal International Jazz Festival](#), which begins the same week as our meeting. Free time is also being provided on most days to sample Montreal's fabulous and varied food. Fine French cuisine, regional Quebec fare, terrific delis, and fantastic Asian and Indian restaurants can all be found within walking distance of the hotel. There are also sidewalk cafes where you can get a great cup of coffee and a croissant or sinful dessert. Many outdoor recreational activities are within a short drive, and the mountains, towns and villages of Quebec are a fine place to spend a summer vacation.

Mark your calendar now: Teratology 2001 – 24-28 June in Montreal.





New Logo Identified

We received over 150 responses to our web-based survey about possible new logos. We had asked respondents to assess four options, including our current logo, on a 1-5 scale of "dislike a lot" to "like a lot".

The mean scores for the three new choices were fairly comparable, but the distribution of scores for each logo was really distinct. Most of our members were neutral about our current logo; most of the scores were 3 or 4, with very few 1s or 5s. Making the small change of replacing "Established 1961" with "Birth Defects Research" shifted the responses one grade to the right; i.e., there were a lot more 4s and 5s than for the current logo, with relatively few 1s and 2s. Opinions were much more polarized about the proposed new designs. There were very few neutral (3 rating) votes for either of these. All the votes were in the 1/2 or 4/5 categories; i.e., you either loved it or you hated it.

It seems to me that the purpose of the logo change should be to make people feel better about the Society, not to polarize them. **Accordingly, we have decided to adopt the slightly modified version of the current logo as our new logo.** The logo will appear on the cover of the journal and in other official capacities.

We received a lot of positive comments, and few negative comments, about the wording and text style of the proposed logo from James Ricks, a student at Brigham Young University. "Teratology Society" was printed in bold blue letters, followed by "Birth Defects Research, Education, Prevention". This message is consistent with the mission statement we adopted a couple of years ago, and our members responded well to it. **So, we have decided to use James's text as our new letterhead. The logo will no longer appear on our stationery.** It did not reproduce well, and could only be reproduced in black & white. Now we have the option of having color, and our letterhead will clearly define who we are and what we do when we correspond, both with our members and outside the Teratology Society.

Many thanks to all of you who provided your opinions. Incidentally, we will be showing our gratitude to James Ricks by providing him with free student membership for the next four years.

George Daston



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

WHAT SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS DO YOU ATTEND?

Are the other attendees interested in teratology?

What can you do to stimulate or nurture this interest?

HAVE YOU EVER SPONSORED A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION?

At the last Teratology Society meeting our Council voted to explore the possibility of actively recruiting new members at two selected scientific meetings. The concept for recruitment is based on the premise that these select meetings are attended by scientists who are active in various areas of research and that some of these areas of interest will coincide with the interests of the Teratology Society. Our recruiting function will be to inform these interested scientists about the Society and how our diverse areas of expertise may supplement their own intellectual needs.

TO DO THIS, WE WILL NEED YOUR HELP.

The concept is to market our scientific community to interested individuals through information provided on a table top display booth and by our members answering questions concerning the Teratology Society.

THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN HELP.

Council needs suggestions of which scientific meetings you think would be most appropriate for this approach. We are limiting ourselves to just two meetings the first year in order to keep our expenditures low and to determine the success of this method for recruiting new members.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The composition of material presented on the tabletop display must be relevant to the meeting at which the booth is displayed. The membership is being asked to provide information on meetings that may be appropriate for a display booth and for materials that may be included in the text or graphics. The coordination of text and graphics preparation will be the responsibility of Council and the Membership Committee.

We are also asking for volunteers who will be attending the selected meetings. We need individuals who are willing to set up our tabletop display and/or spend an hour or possibly two in the booth. These concerned members will answer questions and hopefully sign applications for potential new members.

We do not have a specific number of new member applications established as an indicator that this approach is working. Nor have we determined which two meetings will be selected for the initial testing of this recruitment approach. Therefore, if you have suggestions of meetings we should consider, please submit them to George Dearlove, Secretary, to Sid Hunter, Chair of the Membership Committee, to any of the Council Members or to Tonia Masson at the Society office. Please also indicate if you would be willing to serve the Society for an hour or two during this meeting.

WHAT CAN MY EMPLOYER DO?

We need a tabletop display...hopefully one of the modern low weight, easy traveling pop up types that are currently available. If your company has a tabletop display unit they are no longer using, or if they are looking for some way to make a material contribution to the Teratology Society, then a tabletop booth is perfect!

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF THIS?

The Teratology Society member who sponsors the greatest number of eligible new member applications will receive a free guest banquet ticket for the next Teratology Society Annual Meeting.

WHAT DOES MY EMPLOYER GET?

The corporation that provides the tabletop booth will receive recognition in the newsletter. Recognition will also be displayed in the booth when it is set up at a scientific meeting.

For more information contact George Dearlove at george.dearlove@primedica.com or Sid Hunter at hunter.sid@epamail.epa.gov.



Membership Directory Moves On-line

The Teratology Society Membership Directory will be placed on the Society's Web site in late fall 2000. The Directory will provide the membership with easy access to their colleagues, without a password requirement. The Directory was previously printed in the journal, utilizing the page budget and limiting the updates to information to one time a year.

Having the Directory on-line will eliminate the hassles of trying to find the directory and having out-dated information for fellow members. Should your contact information change, you will simply need to provide headquarters with your new information.

The Directory will list each member's name, affiliation, address, phone and fax numbers and email address. If you wish to exclude information from the Directory, please send your request and reasoning to headquarters at tshq@teratology.org.

While the on-line Directory receives its final touches, the Directory will also be published in a fall issue of the Journal.



Member Recognition

Dr. Robert Brent, Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics; Radiology; Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology received the Health Physics Society's prestigious Robley D. Evans Commemorative Medal for the year 2000. Dr. Brent was presented the award on June 27, 2000.

The award was in recognition of Dr. Brent's career in counseling institutions, colleagues and patients about radiation risks and was particularly unique since he is not a member of the Health Physics Society.



Member Condolences

The Society recently received word that Dr. David Walsh passed away. The following letter was sent to Mrs. Walsh on behalf of the Society.

August 9, 2000

Mrs. Francis Walsh
133 Windsor Street
Paddington, NSW 2021

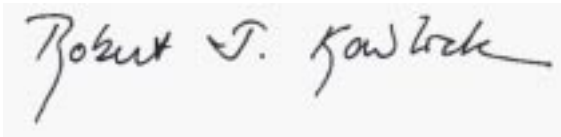
Dear Mrs. Walsh,

On behalf of the 723 members of the Teratology Society I would like to extend our sincere condolences to you and your family on the untimely death of David. Everyone who knew him shares your sorrow. The field of Teratology has lost an eminent researcher and valued colleague, one whose character was most respected and admired. The world has truly lost someone very special. David's sharp wit and warm, earthy humor at our meetings will be sorely missed.

We know you share with us in the consolation that David's contributions to the study of birth defects will live well into the future, and will help to relieve some of the hardship of future generations. Please know that there will be an appropriate moment of silence in his memory at our next meeting in Montreal, and later, many good stories and toasts to our good friend.

Our heartfelt best wishes go to you and your family.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Kavlock
President



Management Contract Renewed

Council reviewed and unanimously approved a new contract with Association Innovation & Management, Inc. (AIM) (formerly Association Development Group) during Council IA at The Breakers. The new 18-month contract will enable the Society to continue to operate with an efficient business office with only a 3% increase in fees. The Teratology Society has contracted with AIM for management services since January 1, 1998; the rate increase in the new contract is the first increase that AIM has requested and is less than the inflation rate for this corresponding period.

Under the management of AIM the Society has reaped the benefits of a highly trained professional staff who has helped reduce our overall expenses while increasing the services provided to the Society. AIM's strength in hotel contract negotiations for the Annual Meeting and oversight of the budget are tremendous assets to the operation of the Society.



Dues Increase

The membership approved an \$11 increase in annual dues, beginning in 2001. The reason for the increase is to cover a subscription price increase for Teratology, from \$49 to \$60 per year. The price increase was requested by Wiley-Liss, the publisher of the journal. This is the first subscription price increase since the Teratology Society renewed its contract with Wiley-Liss in 1994. The \$11 increase represents a 3% annual increase over the seven-year period from 1994-2001, consistent with the inflation rate during this time. Council concluded that the increase was reasonable and within the bounds of our contract with Wiley-Liss; therefore, it recommended that George Daston present the proposed increase to the membership for consideration. Council also realizes that any dues increase might be a hardship on some members; accordingly, it recommended that the increase be limited to the \$11 requested by the publisher to cover the subscription costs, not a penny more.

The Society is renegotiating its contract with Wiley-Liss to make it more favorable to the Society. George Daston explained to the membership that our approval of Wiley-Liss' request for an increase would be sign of good will on the part of the Society towards Wiley-Liss. A major aspect of the renegotiation is an attempt to get Wiley-Liss to share some of the revenue from the journal with the Teratology Society. If the negotiations are successful, this revenue will be used to mitigate further dues increases or perhaps even to decrease dues sometime in the future.

