

The Teratology Society Newsletter

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Letter from the President

Christina Chambers

As we come to the close of 2008 and look to the coming year, the hard work and energy of the Society's Strategic Planning Working Groups is starting to bear fruit. With each Working Group's recommendations and summary report in hand, Melissa Tassinari and the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee will be working with Council to implement recommendations through each of the Society's standing committees, as well as other avenues. However, I think we can feel satisfied that early progress has already been achieved for each of our Strategic Intentions.

One major accomplishment towards our goal of improved Communications was the launch of the new website. The site is now in a format designed to be much more functional as well as appealing to the user. Thanks to the Website Committee, under the leadership of Amar Singh, Ed Carney, and Tony DeLise, this vehicle should increasingly become a focal point for communication within the Society and to the public. Similarly, our goal of increased Visibility for the Society was recently addressed by the Public Affairs Committee, led by Patte Bittner, who drafted and

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Vice President Report

Barbara Hales

The 49th Annual Meeting of the Teratology Society will be June 26-July 1, 2009, in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. The Wyndham Rio Mar Resort, set on a 500-acre tropical resort on magnificent Rio Mar Beach, is located on the Northeast corner of Puerto Rico.

The 2009 Program Committee of the Teratology Society, partnering with the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS); and Neurobehavioral Teratology Society (NBTS), has arranged for an outstanding and expansive scientific program. The theme of the 2009 scientific program is "Gene-Environment Interactions: Impact on Maternal and Child Health". The program for the 2009 Teratology Society Annual Meeting includes three education courses, nine cutting edge scientific symposia, three state of the art lectures, and two lunch box sessions. There are also opportunities for open research communications such as platform talks or poster presentations. The session topics address newer concepts in the field and are likely to generate lively interaction.

The topics to be discussed under our theme will range from the latest findings in basic research on the developmental basis of adult disease to the epidemiology, underlying mechanisms and management of such common problems as prematurity and maternal obesity. A joint TS, NBTS and OTIS symposium will focus on global issues in maternal and child health. Hot topics to be discussed include the use of natural herbal products during pregnancy and the role of genes and the environment in autism. Considerations of how to ensure drug safety, both during pregnancy and in children, will encompass approaches that range all the way from studies in non-human primates to computational toxicology.

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submitted a thoughtful and detailed response to the FDA's request for public comment on the proposed revision to the format of the "pregnancy label".

In keeping with the goal of increasing the value of the Annual Meeting, our Program Committee, led by Barbara Hales, along with the Education Committee, chaired by Tacey White, and our sister organizations OTIS and NBTS, have assembled a spectacular agenda for 2009 that showcases our multi-disciplinarity while highlighting the global relevance of the work that we do. Sponsorship opportunities are available for the 2009 Teratology Society Annual Meeting. Under our current economic conditions, your support for the Society, and in particular the Annual Meeting, is more important than ever. Individual events available for sponsorship include: the banquet and banquet reception, poster session receptions and the welcoming reception. General meeting sponsorship opportunities also exist. Towards the goal of increasing the number of new members and retaining those we have, our Membership Committee, led by Bob Parker, as well as the Student Affairs Committee, led by Mary Alice Smith, have taken steps to analyze our membership mix and stability and to recommend modifications to the process of recruitment. In support of that effort, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, chaired by Gloria Jahnke, has completed the constitutional amendment process to increase the size of the Membership Committee so that sufficient person-power is in place to deal with this critical challenge. In concert with the goal of Membership retention, the Fraser Award Committee, led by Sonja Rasmussen, has conducted a thorough review of all of the awards and honors offered by the Society in order to make recommendations for future revisions/additions. Linked to all our strategic goals is the work of the Publications Committee, chaired by Elaine Francis, who oversees this important arm of the Society for communications and visibility in an ever-changing and competitive environment. And last, the goal of describing and capitalizing on our Shared Scientific Identify will be addressed by a new ad hoc committee to be named this year.

Even more than we anticipated, 2009 will present new challenges - not the least of which will be financial. With a solid investment strategy in place, our Finance

Committee, led by Ida Washington, will also be working on creative methods for fundraising, while matching our resources to our expenses.

As we continue to make progress towards these goals, I think our collaborative efforts will take on a special significance as we approach the 50th anniversary year of the Society. As we take a look back at the great history of the Society, we will need to continue to ask ourselves if this is where we want or need to be in 2010. ■

Website Redesign

Ed Carney

As promised at the Annual Meeting, the completely revamped Teratology Society Website went live in early October! If you haven't visited the new and improved site yet, please do so soon. You will find a much more attractive look, including a home page with scrolling images depicting the diversity of our society. Navigation is much more intuitive, with drop-down menus under the major headings and members-only pages which are clearly marked with a key symbol. To facilitate more transparent and effective communication within our society, each TS committee, working group and Council now have their own pages for posting their mission, current rosters, recent minutes, work products, etc. The new site also is linked much more effectively with the TS member data base, enabling enhanced functionalities. The revamped site is the product of a two-year effort by the Website Committee, led in particular by Amar Singh and Ed Carney, with invaluable guidance from Tonia Masson, graphical design assistance from AIM staff, and implementation of the new design by webmaster Andy Valdini and AIM staff.

Not to rest on its laurels, the Website Committee, led by current chair Tony DeLise, is pursuing further improvements which include a newly redesigned Student & Postdoc section (coming very soon) and the addition of discussion forum capabilities to enhance communication between TS committees, Council and the members at large. However, the ultimate success of the website requires you, the TS member, to visit the site frequently. We hope that the site will soon become your "information hub" for all things teratological. ■

The Annual Meeting provides a place and time to catch up with colleagues, make new friends, network, and indulge in discussions from philosophical to practical with established experts in the field, new researchers, and students. It is also a place and time to promote and express our scientific diversity as a Society of fellow clinicians, scientists and science policy regulators from academic, industrial, and government sectors. We are looking forward to seeing you there! ■



Wyndham Rio Mar Resort in Puerto Rico.
Experience the view first hand in June 2009.

Developmental Toxicology – New Directions Workshop

Study design, endpoints, analysis and interpretation of developmental toxicity testing for regulatory safety assessment have remained largely unchanged for over 30 years. Yet our understanding of embryo/fetal development, and targets and mechanisms of developmental toxicity have advanced tremendously over that period, as have technologies and methods of investigation. The Developmental and Reproductive Toxicology (DART) Technical Committee of the ILSI Health and Environmental Sciences Institute (HESI) will host a workshop titled “Developmental Toxicology – New Directions” with the purpose of providing a comprehensive and critical evaluation of developmental toxicity testing in the face of these advances. Areas of focus will include current animal models and study designs, interpretation and impact of findings on human safety assessment, and application of new technologies and testing strategies. Recommendations and research needs will be identified. The workshop will be held at the Westin City Center in Washington, DC on April 29-30, 2009. Please contact Dr. James Kim of HESI (202-659-3306; jkim@hesiglobal.org) for more information! ■

Renew Your Membership!

Your continued membership is important to the Teratology Society. Please renew your membership before December 31, 2008. You may pay on-line or download the renewal form via the Website.

During the on-line renewal process you will be requested to provide demographic information. Please complete this information as it helps the Society respond to information necessary for obtaining funding for Society events. The demographic information is also used to help analyze membership data and trends.

Renewing your dues is just one of the features available to Members only on the new Website. You may also update your contact information and access the Membership Directory.

If you encounter any difficulties renewing your dues or using the Members only portion of the Website, please contact the office at tshq@teratology.org. ■

Developmental Toxicology – Third Edition

Deborah Hansen

Highlighting the latest advances in genetics and biochemistry, the completely revised Third Edition of Developmental Toxicology in the Target Organ Toxicology Series reviews the field from basic science, clinical, epidemiological and regulatory perspectives. Contributions from top scientists in the field bring together developments in molecular embryology and cell biology as they apply to problems in developmental toxicology. It covers testing of pharmaceutical and environmental agents and interpretation of developmental toxicology data, highlighting mathematical and statistical techniques. This edition is edited by Deborah Hansen from FDA and Barbara Abbott from EPA and is published by Informa Healthcare.

Potential mechanisms of developmental toxicants that are covered in this edition include apoptosis, alterations in signal transduction pathways, as well as effects on nutrition and epistasis. New techniques being used to address mechanistic questions include targeted gene disruption, cell culture methods such as whole embryo culture and the use of embryonic stem cells and genomic approaches. Zebrafish are being investigated as an alternative to mammalian animal models in an effort to decrease the use of higher animal models as well as to shorten the time involved in preclinical testing. Progress has also been made on the development of physiologically based pharmacokinetic models as a way to extrapolate across species. Interpretation of large amounts of information, especially from newer high-throughput techniques has required new approaches to analyzing and compiling the information leading to the development of bioinformatic systems and the new field of computational toxicology. How this information can be used in assessing potential risk to humans, as well as to specific subpopulations of humans are covered in additional chapters. Finally methods used to identify developmental toxicants in humans are discussed.

Prevention of birth defects is the goal of all developmental toxicologists. The best way to

tackle this important task is an approach in which animal research and information from clinical settings are taken together in an effort to identify which compounds may pose a risk as well as whether certain subpopulations may have an increased risk. The first two editions of Developmental Toxicology focused on this integrated approach for characterizing outcome, and the editors have tried to maintain that approach in this edition. ■

Possible Funding Opportunity!

The EPA's National Center for Environmental Research announces a possible funding opportunity. More information can be found at their website:

[Computational Toxicology Research Centers: *in vitro* and *in silico* Models Of Developmental Toxicity Pathways](#)

- Open: November 4, 2008

- Closing: January 29, 2009

Plan Ahead Future TS Meetings!

50th Annual Meeting

June 26-30, 2010
Marriott Louisville Downtown
Louisville, KY

51st Annual Meeting

June 25-29, 2011
Loews Coronado Bay Resort
Coronado, CA

52nd Annual Meeting

June 23-27, 2012
Marriott Baltimore Waterfront
Baltimore, MD

53rd Annual Meeting

June 22-26, 2013
Loews Ventana Canyon Resort
Tucson, AZ