

Message from the President

Submitted by William Slikker, Jr., Ph.D.

While we are still basking in the glow of our last Annual Meeting, it is time to examine what makes the Teratology Society so successful. One explanation resides in the diversity of dedicated clinicians, researchers, information specialists and regulators who work in different areas using different approaches but all with the same basic goal of understanding and preventing birth defects. It is the synergy of our various efforts that provides the motivation and energy necessary to make a difference. And each day members of the Teratology Society do make a difference. Whether it is training and mentoring students, providing mechanistic explanations of developmental toxicity, assessing safety, administering therapies for parents and baby or providing solid advice, we as a Society continually demonstrate that we are committed to excellence.

As a Society, however, we do face major challenges. Our membership rolls have remained stable but have not grown as markedly as other societies. We take pride in our training of quality students and yet the number of training grants has not expanded. We provide awards for quality manuscripts for the Society journal but more submissions are needed from both members and nonmembers. If the majority of our members submitted just one or two manuscripts a year to our new journal, Birth Defects Research, the Society would benefit greatly. We can meet these challenges by enhancing our outreach through Society sponsored consensus building workshops and collaborations with other institutions that share the common goal of preventing birth defects including CDC, MOD, FASEB and NIEHS. However, in the final analysis, it is up to each and every one of us to contribute our share to the health of the Society.

The diversity of disciplines within the Teratology Society membership provides the opportunity for translational research incorporating new genetic-based biology and applying it to human populations. The membership is uniquely situated to take advantage of the genomic and proteomic approaches and apply them to the biology of development. The content of many symposia and stand-alone meetings has focused attention on the opportunity to apply gene expression data and structural protein information to normal and abnormal development. What will it take to push the equilibrium in the direction of incorporation of genetic and molecular biology into mainstream Teratology? We will need support for experimental work through adequate grant mechanisms, student training programs to provide the technical and research skills, application of new information in the clinical setting, and appreciation from the regulatory community to ask for and use the new biology in the risk assessment and regulatory environment. Yes, some retraining will be necessary but the opportunity for a greater understanding of health risk and treatment scenarios for the developing human is tremendous. At no time in the past have we been poised to make a bigger leap in the understanding of the cause of birth defects or the opportunity to prevent them. We hear from our colleagues in government agencies that public health is the focus. What better way to move the field of Teratology forward to protect public health than to understand, at a fundamental level, the biology of development, both normal and abnormal.

So as we enjoy the synergy of our active membership, we should also focus on enhancing our numbers of enthusiastic members, the number and quality of manuscript submissions to Birth Defects Research, and the opportunities for training ourselves and our students as leaders in the field.

At our Annual Meeting in the historic city of Philadelphia, June 21-26, 2003, we will once again provide an opportunity to come together and learn from one another. Our Program Chair, Shelley Tyl, is assembling a scholarly assortment of intellectual delights and our Society Historian, Ron Jensh, is preparing an exhibit from the Teratology Society archives. Both will be asking for your input so that the Society membership and guests can once again enjoy the scientifically rich and socially warm environment of the Teratology Society Annual Meeting.

For information about Philadelphia and the local attractions visit the Convention and Visitors Bureau web site (<http://pcvb.org>).

Vice President's Report
Submitted by Rochelle W. Tyl, Ph.D.

The Program Committee is in the midst of organizing and scheduling symposia, workshops, continuing education, and sunrise courses. To date, here is what we are planning (all preliminary):

1. Continuing Education Course (Dana Shuey, CE Chair)
Day 1: From Basic Science to Drug Labeling: A Case Study Using the Statins
Day 2: Advances in Animal Models for Human Syndromes/Anomalies

2. Sunrise Course (Dana Shuey, CE Chair)
Comparative Placentology: Interspecies Comparisons With Focus on Transport, Metabolism, and Biochemistry

3. Symposia
 - a. March of Dimes (Barbara Struthers and Steve Harris, Co-Chairs): Assisted Reproduction Techniques (ART) and Reproductive Outcomes
 - b. Teratogen Update (Bob Brent, Chair): Endocrine-active Compounds
 - c. Childhood Obesity: Impact on Children's Health and Possible Developmental Etiologies (Bill Slikker and Bern Schwetz, Co-Chairs)
 - d. Occupational Exposures and Reproductive Outcomes (George Daston, Chair)
 - e. NIEHS: Fetal Basis of Adult Disease (Jerry Heindel, Chair) – will be different than the list from SOT's advance program announcement
 - f. Rat Inverted Yolk Sac Placenta is Site of Teratogenic Action of Hb-Based Blood Substitute (Carmen Walthour and Joe Holson, Co-Chairs)
 - g. Effects of Anti-oxidants on Development (Asher Ornoy, Chair)
 - h. Autoimmune Diseases and Prenatal Development (Asher Ornoy, Chair)
 - i. Wiley Liss (B. Abbott, Chair); in progress

4. Workshops
 - a. For technicians by clinicians on the role(s) that preclinical animal studies play in the process of drug development to clinical trials (George Dearlove, Chair): in progress
 - b. Public Affairs (Carole Kimmel and Janine Polifka, Co-Chairs): How to Communicate Animal Data to Clinicians for Their Use in Counseling women About Drug Use During Pregnancy
5. Wilson Award for and Presentation of Best Paper in 2002 (B. Abbott, Publications Committee, Chair) – deliberations will begin January 2003
6. Evening Programs/Entertainment/Itineraries (George Dearlove, Chair) – in progress

It will be an exciting, educational, inspirational, and fun meeting. Please plan to attend in Philadelphia in June 2003!

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|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Program Committee: | Barbara Abbott | Jeanne Manson |
| | Karen Acuff (NBTS) | Antonio Marchado |
| | Judy Buelke-Sam (NBTS) | Dana Shuey |
| | George Dearlove | Wayne Spoo |
| | Steve Harris | Kathe Stepanuk (OTIS) |
| | Ken Jones (incoming VP) | Shelley Tyl (Chair) |
| | Tom Knudsen | |

The Teratology Society appreciates the support and participation of the 2002 Annual Meeting Sponsors and Exhibitors. The Annual Meeting was held at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, June 22-27.

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For information regarding opportunities available during the 2003 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, please contact the headquarters office at (703) 438-3104 or tshq@teratology.org.

**Public Affairs Committee Report
Submitted by Christina Chambers, MPH**

The Public Affairs Committee has finalized the statement on the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and will submit it for publication in the Journal. The statement has also been posted to the Teratology Society Web site (http://teratology.org/pubs/alcohol_statement_072002.pdf) for members to review.

Based on some suggestions made at the Teratology Society Strategic Planning meeting this Spring, the PAC is considering an alternative format for the Public Affairs Symposium in 2003. This format would involve a workshop-type activity involving invited experts from within and without the Society. The task of the workshop participants would be to tackle a specific issue and produce a summary statement at the end of the day. The resulting product would represent work that is sponsored by the Teratology Society; however, the actual statement would represent the combined opinions of the workshop participants.

Four members of the PAC are rotating off the committee this year. They are Janine Polifka, Ed Lammer, Jane Adams, and Ron Librizzi. Many thanks to these members for their active participation in committee activities over the last several years. We welcome five new members to the committee in 2002. They are Jim Mills, David Wise, Devendra Kochhar, Andy Hendrickx, and Sarah Ali-Khan as an ad hoc student member.

**Request for Nominations
Submitted by Mary Alice Smith, Ph.D.**

The 2002-2003 Teratology Society Nominations Committee is developing a slate of candidates for the following positions: Vice-President Elect, Councilor and Secretary. If you know of a member who has the qualifications for one of these positions, is willing to commit the necessary time and energy, and is interested in the future direction of the Society, please email your suggestion(s) and comments to any of the Committee members listed below.

The Committee will be selecting a final slate and alternates to submit to Council by December, so please take an active role in determining the Teratology Society's leadership. Help shape your Society's future by nominating candidates for these leadership positions.

Nominations Committee

Mary Alice Smith, Chair
Mildred Christian
Kok-Wah Hew
Deborah Hansen
Cynthia A. Moore
Jan M. Friedman

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**James G. Wilson Publication Award 2002 Winner: Multifactorial Genetics of Exencephaly in SELH/Bc Mice. *Teratology* 2001; 64:189-200.
Submitted by Lewis Holmes, M.D.**

On behalf of the Teratology Society, we are pleased to announce that this article by Professor Diana Juriloff (senior author) and her associates was selected as the winner in this year's competition.

The James G. Wilson Publication Award is initiated by the Teratology Society. The Award is presented on an annual basis for the best paper published in *Teratology*. 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 papers to *Teratology*.

The primary focus of the publication must be on mechanisms of dysmorphogenesis and developmental susceptibility and is judged on originality, approach and impact.

Papers published during 2002 will be eligible for the next Award, which will be presented during the 2003 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

The Editor-in-Chief and the Section Editors of *Teratology* will nominate manuscripts published during 2002 for the Award. From these nominations the Publication Committee will select their choice for best paper.

The James G. Wilson Publication Award will continue under the new journal format.

Liaison Reports

FASEB Federal Funding Initiative Submitted by Jeanne Manson, Ph.D., MSCE

Each year FASEB develops a priority list of research initiatives for federal funding. FASEB actively lobbies congress and other federal funding agencies to establish funding programs for these recommendations. A short list with concise recommendations is the best way to go, as there are over 21 societies represented in FASEB, each with its own research agenda. As the Teratology Society representative to FASEB, I would like to propose the following set of initiatives for FY 2003:

- Support research programs to study gene-environment interactions in the etiology of birth defects, to improve the ability to identify parents and fetuses at risk, and transfer this knowledge to birth defects prevention and control strategies.
- Support inter-disciplinary training programs at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels that combine molecular, genetic and epidemiologic methods to study gene-environment interactions in the complex etiology of birth defects.
- Support active laboratory and epidemiologic surveillance programs to identify new environmental teratogens.

Please let me know your thoughts about these initiatives!!! I will need to receive your comments in the next few weeks to incorporate them into the FASEB recommendations.

Jeanne M. Manson, Ph.D., MSCE
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Division of Human Genetics and Molecular Biology
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ACOG, Committee on Genetics Submitted by Karen Filkins, M.D.

Last year I provided the ACOG Committee a written list of speakers on a variety of topics related to Teratology. The Committee seemed to be more interested in chromosomal or single gene disorders rather than the broader area of birth defects.

At this year's meeting the composition of the Committee was changed and there is much greater recognition that our concern is prenatal diagnosis of birth defects and there was a much greater interest in Teratology than I have seen before. There were many inquiries about the consumption of fish by pregnant women and methylmercury risks. I believe that some common goals can be developed and presented at the next meeting – such as a common effort related to FAS. I would love to receive input from other liaison members about this.

AIUM (Ultrasound in Medicine) Submitted by Karen Filkins, M.D.

Nothing specific but a source of collaboration for a possible prenatal diagnosis project.

ASHGEN- OB/Geneticist Group Meeting
Submitted by Karen Filkins, M.D.

I organized this meeting of about 100 OB Geneticists each year and would like to have an agenda item devoted to encouragement of this group to submit articles to the *Teratology* Journal. This would be great for collaborative projects.

David W. Smith Workshop on Morphogenesis and Malformations
Submitted by John Graham, M.D., ScD

There are three major Annual Meetings around the world for dysmorphologists interested in research confirming causes and mechanisms for human birth defects. Participation in each of these meetings is by invitation from the meeting organizers and contingent upon acceptance of a submitted abstract. The oldest of these three meetings is the David W. Smith Workshop on Morphogenesis and Malformations, which was first established in 1980. Art Aylsworth and Roger Stevenson in South Carolina organized this year's meeting. Research offering insight into mechanisms of malformations and morphogenesis was given priority. Other topics of emphasis included Kabuki syndrome, cholesterol metabolism and morphogenesis, defects of cutaneous structures, and skeletal morphogenesis.

There are two European dysmorphology meetings. The European Meeting on Dysmorphology in Strasbourg, France meets September 4-7, 2002 and is organized by Claude Stoll and Jean-Pierre Fryns. This year's meeting will emphasize mental retardation and multiple congenital anomaly syndromes, birth defects with vascular anomalies, overgrowth syndromes, and fetal pathology. The Manchester Birth Defects Meeting is in Manchester, England on November 19-22, 2002 (abstract deadline 9/15/02) and it is organized by Dian Donnai and Jill Clayton-Smith. Papers on all aspects of dysmorphology are welcome, but priority will be given to those dealing with mechanisms of morphogenesis. Special topics this year include disorders associated with abnormal chromatin configuration, skeletal dysplasias, and skin disorders.

Most of these dysmorphology meetings have sessions on teratology, which is considered to be integral to their central emphasis on mechanisms of normal and abnormal morphogenesis. Basic scientists working in teratology are considered to be valued resource people at these dysmorphology meetings.

Meetings of Interest

Centers for Disease Control—National Center for Birth Defects & Developmental Disabilities

September 17-19, 2002

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be holding its inaugural national conference on birth defects, developmental disabilities, and disability and health. This conference, entitled "Charting the Course: Birth Defects, Developmental Disabilities, and Disability and Health" will be held September 17-19, 2002, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. More information about this meeting can be found at (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/conference.htm>). The Teratology Society will be exhibiting at the meeting. Members interested in helping staff the booth should contact Tonia Masson at tmasson@teratology.org.

American College of Toxicology

November 19-12, 2002

American College of Toxicology will hold its 23rd Annual Meeting at the Hershey Lodge in November. Abstracts must be submitted by September 3. Many Teratology Society members have organized sessions and/or are presenting during the meeting. More information about this meeting can be found at <http://www.actox.org>.