

Message From The President July 2008

It is with extreme pleasure and excitement that I address the membership of our Society following what was arguably one of the best meetings that we've ever had. I am amazed by how many comments I have been privileged to hear, singing the praises of both the science and the collegiality of our members, which in combination with the stellar efforts of the local hosts and Society leadership resulted in a "slam dunk" in Madison. Special praise should be heaped upon the local meeting organizer, Chris Coe and our outgoing President Margaret Kemeny and Secretary/Treasurer Mary Coussons-Read.

I am especially humbled and greatly honored to serve the Society at a time when the role of brain-immune interactions in health and illness is receiving so much attention in so many areas of medicine and society. The prestige of the work of our membership and the Society is probably best manifested by the unheralded leap in the impact factor of Brain Behavior and Immunity, which now ranks ahead of many of our competing journals (who will remain nameless): Kudos to Keith Kelley and his crackerjack group of Associate Editors, Editors and staff.

I think the time is ripe for us to press our advantage and grow as a Society both in terms of our membership as well as our financial sustainability. Each of you should look around you at your institutions and think about who might enjoy being a part of our Society, and senior membership should consider supporting the Society above and beyond our membership dues. I am certainly prepared to do my part.

I also firmly believe that we need to spend more time and energy diversifying the mix of our Society with the goal of fostering a multicultural and multiethnic membership that complements our multidisciplinary scientific focus. To this end, I have plans to implement a PNIRS Diversity Initiative that will include a number of new opportunities including Diversity Trainee Awards for underrepresented minorities. Efforts will also be made to increase the visibility of scientists of diversity at our annual meetings.

As we look forward, I am probably most excited about our upcoming meeting in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. Obviously, the local hosts, Moni Fleshner and Mary Coussons-Read, are preparing to raise the bar to new heights, so strap on your oxygen masks and get ready to rock! The meeting theme will be "PNI and Pathology: Translational Implications for Treatment and Prevention." The short course entitled: "Inflammation and its Discontents", will focus on fundamentals of the innate immune response as well as its relationship to the pathophysiology of various disease

states such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and pain. The short course will also include some of our most outstanding teachers, including Moni Fleshner, Linda Watkins and Firdaus Dhabhar. The Presidential Symposium will be another special highlight with an emphasis on the impact of cytokines on synaptic plasticity and its relationship to the development of stress-related disorders and depression. Based on feedback from members, we also plan to foster more discussion following symposium presentations and will encourage continuing interactions between new and former trainees as well as Society members and NIH staff. As always, we will continue our commitment to the trainees by providing trainee travel awards and multiple activities to foster trainee career development including the senior faculty/trainee colloquium and numerous opportunities for trainees to give presentations both in the Data Blitz and oral presentation sessions.

Finally we will be especially honored to have a keynote presentation from Manfred Schedlowski, who will give the esteemed Norman Cousins Award Lecture, and a talk from Jonathan Godbout, recipient of the cherished Robert Ader Award. Plans for Colorado are already well underway, so carve the dates into your calendars and call your friends...See you in Breckenridge!!!

Safe Travels, Andrew Miller