Letter from the President

At this time of crisis in our country and with the specter of terrorism in our midst, it is crucial that we carry on with our lives and demonstrate to the rest of the world that violence cannot shatter our resolve. In that spirit, ARO is vibrant and plans are in full swing for the ARO MidWinter in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida, January 27-31, 2002.

The Presidential Symposium will focus on Early Developmental Processes. James Battey, NIDCD Director, will discuss Genetics. Allen Ryan will review issues related to Stem Cell Research. Edwin Rabel and Patricia Leake will speak on early development of the inner ear and cochlear nucleus. Derek Houston will speak on early language development and will present new findings with deaf infants following cochlear implantation. Greg Ball will present on neuroplasticity related to vocal behavior in songbirds. Karen Kirk and Mario Svirsky will speak on methods of assessing the effects of early auditory experience and early implantation on communication skill development.

The Presidential Lecture will be delivered by James Hudspeth who is also this year’s Award of Merit Recipient. Nearly 1000 scientific papers will be presented which include the tremendously popular poster sessions, arranged topically, and an outstanding array of platform presentations and symposia.

Congratulations to Eric Young and the JARO editorial board on an extremely successful launch of our new journal. Eric has recently received word that JARO will be included in the major medical indexing services which will greatly enhance the stature of ARO and JARO in the medical publication milieu.

We express our thanks to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders for once again supporting our MidWinter Meeting through their conference grant mechanism.

Richard T. Miyamoto, M.D.
ARO President

The 2001 ARO MidWinter Meeting

ARO members could see the flame and smoke trail of the Feb. 7, 2001 launch of Space Shuttle Atlantis carrying the Destiny Science Module.

Photo by P. Santi

The 24th ARO MidWinter Meeting was held on February 4-8, 2001 at the Tradewinds Island Resort in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida. By any measure, the meeting was a great success. There were 1,529 attendees, an increase of about 6% from 2000. There were 1,060 contributed and invited presentations, also an increase from the previous year. Along with the Presidential Symposium, “The Neurobiology of Aging: The Aging Brain,” the ARO Program Committee, led by chair Mario Ruggero, selected several outstanding invited symposia and workshops. As always at the MidWinter Meeting, there was time to meet with colleagues, walk on the beach, and enjoy the great weather.

The 2001 ARO Award of Merit was presented to William S. Rhode of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bill was honored for his contributions to our understanding of cochlear mechanics, notably the vibration of the basilar membrane and tuning, and his more recent studies of cochlear nuclei.

The Travel Awards are supported by funds from the NIDCD, DRF, AAO-HNSF, and Xomed. For the first time this year, ARO was pleased to offer travel awards to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, thanks to a contribution from the DRF.

• A Tuesday lunchtime “Panel on Research Funding” was held in which representatives from seven prominent research funding agencies provided information about their grants programs and how to apply. This was an excellent opportunity for researchers, especially new investigators, to meet the representatives and ask questions.

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Bill’s life and work was celebrated on Tuesday evening during “Awards and Honors” ceremony, followed by a reception.

Judy R. Dubno, Ph.D.
ARO 2001 President

Plans are currently underway for the 25th ARO Midwinter Meeting, to be held January 27-31, 2002 at the Tradewinds Island Resort, St. Petersburg Beach, Florida.
**Letter from the Editor**

After a brief hiatus (Spring, 1998) the “ARO News” is now back into production. We plan to have two newsletters/year, which will be available on the ARO website, and mailed to all ARO members. This year there have been a number of changes in the “publication” of ARO information. First, over the Summer and into the Fall your Editor and a group of dedicated ARO members including: Marc Coltrera, Douglas Cotanche, Judy Dubno, Gerald Popelka, Robert Shannon, and Tom Sims of Talley Management Company evaluated seven different abstract processing vendors for features and costs. As you know, ARO selected Mira Digital Publishing to process the ARO abstracts, from submission through the printing of the Program and Abstract Books. One of my campaign promises was to redesign the ARO website. I found a great web designer whose costs were very reasonable, and I am happy to say that the new site is up and running at http://www.aro.org. Still in the works for the website is a revision in the structure of the membership database to make it easier for you to find other members, and to make it harder for others to use the ARO abstract processing database for spamming. In addition, at your request, last year the complete 2001 MidWinter Meeting abstracts were made available as a single downloadable file. This year Mira has been contracted to include an author index in the Program Book for your use. Finally, if you preregister for the meeting, you should also receive a copy of the Program Book before the meeting. I hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter, and I welcome your suggestions for improving the communication of ARO information. I would like to sincerely thank Judy Dubno for her excellent suggestions on the content and layout of this newsletter. Thanks also go to David Lim for providing the photographs, and to Darla Dobson of Talley for revising this newsletter numerous times.

*Peter Santi, Ph.D.*
*Editor*

**ARO 2002 MidWinter Meeting Preview**

The Program of the 2002 ARO MidWinter Meeting is now finalized. Nearly 1000 submitted abstracts were organized by the ARO Program Committee and the final program was put together by Program Chair Bob Shannon, President Rich Miyamoto, and President-Elect Donata Oertel. In addition to contributed podium and poster sessions, the following special sessions are planned:

**Symposia**
- Early Developmental Processes
- Modeling the OHC Soma
- The Medial Olivocochlear System and Otoacoustic Emissions
- Signal Transduction for the 21st Century

**Workshops**
- Molecular Pathology of the Temporal Bone
- Auditory Physiology and Biophysics
- Down Under: Tribute to Graeme Yates
- Static Pressure in the Middle Ear
- NIDCD Research and Training Workshop for New Investigators

**Special Events**
- Presidential Lecture by A. James Hudspeth
- Issues in Animal Research by Adrian Morrison
- Awards and Honors Night

**AAO-HNSF/ARO Research Forum Call for Papers**

**Deadline:** January 9, 2002

The Research Forum, under joint sponsorship by the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation and the ARO, will be held as part of the 2002 annual Academy meeting (9/22-25) in San Diego CA. Both oral and poster presentations are invited from residents or other investigators on any research topic related to otolaryngology. For full details on submission criteria and instructions, please refer to the Academy’s website. http://www.entnet.org


**In Memoriam**

**DR. NORMA B. SLEPECKY**

Norma Brause Slepecky died on Wednesday, May 2, 2001 at her home in Syracuse after a long fight with ovarian cancer. She was 57. Norma was known to many of us for her expertise in cochlear cell biology and as one of the finest persons in our field. Norma persisted in her research and teaching efforts at the Department of Bioengineering and Neuroscience, Institute for Sensory Research at Syracuse University until the end. She attended her last doctoral student’s defense just two weeks before her death.

Norma’s contributions and enthusiastic influence on her students and colleagues may be recognized by memorial contributions to the Norma Slepecky Lectureship and Undergraduate Research Prize Fund, Institute for Sensory Research, 621 Skytop Road, Syracuse, NY 13244-5290. A description of the memorial fund may be found at http://www.isr.syr.edu/slepecky/

**DR. ROBERT SPENCER**

Dr. Robert Spencer died on Saturday, March 24, 2001 after a long and valiant battle with gastric carcinoma. His research and teaching contributions will be deeply missed by faculty and students at Virginia Commonwealth University as well as by his many colleagues around the world.

**JARO Now Indexed!**

The editorial board of JARO is proud to announce that JARO has been accepted for indexing in three major journal indexing services, Current Contents, Excerpta Medica/EMBASE, and Index Medicus. Eric Young, Editor for JARO, says inclusion in Index Medicus, of course, means that JARO articles will be listed on Medline.
The purpose of the ARO Long Range Planning Committee is to help plan the future directions of the ARO by polling the opinions of the members (mainly through questionnaires) and making appropriate recommendations to the ARO Council and committee chairs. A copy of the complete version of this report can be found on the ARO Website at: http://www.aro.org/org/lrpc/report.html

The 2001 Midwinter Meeting (MWM) was the biggest yet with 1,529 participants – an increase of about 6% over last year. More than two-thirds of those completing the questionnaire rated the overall scientific content of the meeting as “outstanding” or “excellent.” Among the scientific sessions, the Contributed Posters received the highest rating, followed by the Symposia, the Contributed Podium sessions, and the Short Course on “Non-Syndromic Deafness: Clinical Issues & Research Opportunities.” There were many positive comments about the poster sessions, suggesting that the Program Committee achieved a good balance in organizing the sessions. A number of attendees suggested that there was still too much overlap in sessions on a particular topic, but others wanted subject areas consolidated into more tightly organized sessions.

Some members again voiced concerns about moving the MWM to Daytona. Specific objections include: distance from the Orlando airport; poorer weather; hotel is too big/expensive for a casual atmosphere. However, the comments about not moving to Daytona were offset by many negative comments about the crowded poster sessions and the poor conditions in the Banyan Breezeway.

Patricia A. Leake, Ph.D.
Chair, ARO Long Range Planning Committee
Congressman Maloney Receives ARO 2001 Distinguished Public Service Award

The Association for Research in Otolaryngology presented Congressman Jim Maloney (CT -05) with its Distinguished Public Service Award for his efforts in support of medical research, particularly his work to increase funding for the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. ARO President Judy Dubno presented the award at the Association for Research in Otolaryngology’s 24th MidWinter Meeting in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida.

ARO president Judy Dubno said: “Congressman Maloney has been an outstanding leader in the fight to secure funding for medical research for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). His consistent track record of supporting basic science and medical research, patient protections, and his role on the Democratic Health Care Task Force have been invaluable to doctors and patients across this country”.

Congressman Maloney said: “I am honored to receive this award from the Association for Research in Otolaryngology. This leading national medical research society is dedicated to the critically important treatment of ear, nose and throat disorders. I applaud their efforts, and I will continue fighting in Congress to ensure that funding is available for investigation into the basic science and clinical problems associated with hearing, speech, balance, smell, taste, and diseases of the head and neck”.

“Adequate funding for medical research programs has produced major technology advances in treating ENT illnesses and communication disorders. It is vitally important that we continue to make investments that will bring further advances in this field of medicine,” stated Maloney.

Previous ARO Distinguished Public Service Award recipients include Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Congressman John Porter (R-IL), Congressman Dave Weldon (R-FL), and Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD).

ARO 2001 President Dr. Judy Dubno and Congressman Jim Maloney

Call for Symposium and Workshop Proposals for ARO 2003 MidWinter Meeting

The ARO Program Committee is presently soliciting proposals for Symposia and Workshops for the 2003 Midwinter Meeting. The deadline for proposals is January 18, 2002. Symposia and Workshops for the 2003 ARO Meeting will be selected by the ARO Program Committee when they meet during the 2002 ARO Meeting.

Symposia are organized as a series of oral presentations on a theme. Preference will be given to proposals that strive for novel syntheses across or within existing disciplines or explorations of new techniques that will expand research in new directions.

Workshops can be on topics of interest to a focused subgroup of ARO members, and may be scheduled in the evening.

Each proposal should include a title, a brief paragraph describing the organizing theme, a list of speakers and topics, and a brief description of each. Please e-mail proposals before January 18, 2002 to Robert Shannon, Chair of the ARO Program Committee, at Shannon@hei.org

ARO 2001 President Dr. Judy Dubno and Congressman Jim Maloney

Photo by D. Lim

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