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## Editorial

The initiatives of the SSN for 2004 are well underway. The first PhD student day, held at Novartis on June 11, was attended by more than 35 participants. You will find a report about this event on pages 2-3.

The new Website was launched on June 1 and has been visited over 1500 times during the first month. It provides unsurpassed flexibility for maintenance and for on-line interactions with the membership and many of you already have made good use of these options to update your personal data.

The symposia on animal experimentation in September attract numerous participants. We strongly encourage all those performing experimental studies with animals to collect the required credit points by attending these Symposia. They are open to the entire scientific community, with a reduced fee for SSN members.

We also are very pleased to announce the 2005 Best Publication Award. For the third time, we invite all (former) student-members who published a peer-reviewed article as a first or last author to enter the competition for this Award, which will be given at the 2005 Annual Meeting in Zurich.

In a few days, many of us will be in Lisbon for the 4<sup>th</sup> Forum of European Neuroscience, which is expected to draw a record attendance. The next Forum will take place in Vienna in 2006. Is it conceivable to host the following one in Switzerland in 2008? Give us your opinion on page 5!

In the name of the SSN Committee, I thank you for your participation to our new activities and wish you a pleasant summer,

Jean-Marc Fritschy

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## **Travel fellowships of the SSN**

The SSN is offering a record number of 25 travel fellowships to attend the FENS Forum in Lisbon (13) and the meeting of the Society for Neuroscience in San Diego (12). These numbers reflect the commitment of the Society to offer students and junior postdocs the possibility to present their data at these major meetings. The winners of the competition for Lisbon are listed on the Website. The applicants for the SfN meeting will be informed shortly about the decision.

## **The 2004 SSN Best Publication Award**

The competition officially opened on July 1. This Award, which will be given for the third time at the next annual meeting, is reserved to student-members of the SSN who have published a research article as a first or last author in a peer-reviewed journal and who have contributed significantly to the published work.

To enter the competition, the article to be considered has to have been published or accepted for publication between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004. The specific rules for application can be found on the website.

**Application deadline: August 31, 2004.**

## **Introducing the new SSN website**

The new site of the SSN, programmed according to the latest standards of the web, was launched on June 1. The URL ([www.swissneuroscience.ch](http://www.swissneuroscience.ch)) remains the same, but the e-mail address of the SSN has changed ([contact@swiss.neuroscience.ch](mailto:contact@swiss.neuroscience.ch)) to become independent of the location of the

president. The novel site greatly simplifies on-line registration to the manifestations organized by the SSN and provides every member with a secure link to his or her personal record when an update is necessary. We strongly encourage everybody to verify that your record is up-to-date, and we kindly ask all members from Zurich to update their telephone number area code before the change becomes mandatory in March 2005.

The new website also greatly simplifies the posting of news and job applications and it has been designed to become *your* website. The job fair is reserved to SSN members (it is accessed through your e-mail address). News and meeting announcements will be posted as soon as we receive them. Finally, each page on the site can be converted into a PDF document with a simple mouse click on the corresponding icon in the top left corner.

Feedback is possible and welcome. Do not hesitate to communicate us your suggestions and comments, using the “contact us” page, so that we can improve the website and the activities of the SSN according to your needs.

## **Report on the “PhD student day”**

Nicolette Gouder, PhD student at the Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology of the University of Zurich, kindly accepted to write down her impressions of the first PhD student day held on June 11, 2004 at Novartis:

“In my 3rd year as a PhD student in neuropharmacology, I welcomed the initiative of the SSN to organize a PhD student day at Novartis, and I was very eager to participate. I am quite certain many students appreciated the simple fact that such a day was being organized. When graduation day is within reach, every student is faced with the difficult choice of deciding to pursue his or her carrier in academia or in industry. Since it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to visit a large pharmaceutical company unless invited for a talk or an interview, it was with great pleasure that I registered for this event.

We arrived at Novartis, in the St. Johann section at 9 h 00, welcomed a cup of coffee to jolt us to life, and listened to the presentations. The four speakers gave an outline of their educational background, followed by a quick overview of their jobs and responsibilities at Novartis. The short presentations were followed by an open discussion and the possibility to interact directly with the speakers during lunch. In the afternoon, we were taken on a Novartis history tour and to the Pharmacy History Museum.

I asked the participants for their feedback, and their opinions were largely converging. We think that the brief presentations were very well given, perhaps with too much scientific detail. The four speakers gave a clear idea of what is expected of them. We missed, however, a presentation given by a member of Novartis with a different occupation than lab head, such as a recently hired postdoc, for example. Another suggestion would be to have a member from Human Resources explaining how many applications are received daily, how they are dealt with, and which obstacles an applicant might encounter.

The open discussion was highly appreciated, although the time was limited and the room was too small to be able to move around freely from one conversation to another. Perhaps, it would have helped to have more employees joining the open discussion, and to divide the students into smaller groups, each having short discussions with the host of their choice.

The social part in the afternoon was of unequal quality. The Novartis history guided tour was disappointing, whereas the visit to the Pharmacy History Museum, led by its director, was excellent.

Overall, the participants felt that the event was a great idea and success, and should definitely be repeated, with all PhD students being encouraged to attend. We are grateful to Paolo Paganetti, Miriam Bibel, Ivan-Toma Vranesic, Samuel Hintermann and Christopher Wiessner for their commitment, and the support of the SSN is highly appreciated.”

## **Coming-up: Symposia on Animal Experimentation**

Registration is open on the SSN website for the two Symposia on animal experimentation, which will take place in Fribourg on September 17 and in Zurich on September 24, 2004. The focus of the first symposium will be on in vivo animal experiments, including stereotaxic surgery and telemetry, as well as on recent developments with imaging techniques. The second symposium will focus on behavioral analyses of rodents, in particular transgenic mice. The program has been designed to facilitate interactions among the participants and with the speakers. The symposia are open to a broad public, including group leaders, postdocs, and PhD students, interested by practical, but also theoretical and ethical aspects of research with laboratory animals. Attendance will be certified officially and will be recognized as part of the continuous education required by law to perform animal experiments.

Please do not register at the last minute to avoid unnecessary hassle for the organizers. Payment of the registration fee will be required in advance. A payment slip will be sent to all registered participants. Please ensure that your name appears clearly if the fee is being paid by your institution.

## **The 2005 Annual Meeting: second announcement**

As announced previously, the next annual meeting of the SSN will be organized jointly with the USGEB and the Swiss Society for Biological Psychiatry (SSBP). It will take place at the ETH-Hönggerberg campus in Zurich on February 17-19, 2005.

The organizers of this exceptional three-day event have decided to prepare a single program, attractive enough to justify one (or even two) overnight stays in Zurich. The meeting will be entitled “Molecules to mind”, reflecting the main focus of the three organizing societies and the possible synergies emerging from contacts with scientists and clinicians from various fields.

The deadline for online registration and abstract submission will be November 15. Six plenary lectures, 12 symposia, 3 datablitz and poster sessions, several award ceremonies, and the business meetings of the contributing societies should keep all participants busy over the 3 days! A detailed preliminary program will be released on the website of the meeting early in September 2004.

## **FENS meetings: the future?**

The growing success of the FENS meeting denotes the importance of having a Forum of European Neuroscience on a regular basis. However, the large size of the meeting and the complexity of the organization considerably restrict the choice of possible sites across Europe. For these reasons, the Austrian and German Neuroscience Societies have decided to join forces to organize the 5<sup>th</sup> FENS meeting in Vienna in 2006. At the present time, there is no declared candidate for the 2008 meeting and the deadline for presenting a bid has been postponed to the end of September 2004.

Four years ago, the SSN had presented a bid, in competition with Portugal and Spain, for holding the 2004 meeting in Geneva. At the time, the FENS council gave the preference to Lisbon. The organizing committee led by José Castro-Lopes has prepared a very attractive program and we look forward to attending this meeting.

Another concern of the FENS at the time was that the cost of living in Switzerland might be prohibitive for many participants from

economically less favoured countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. It is not certain that this argument holds, given the central position of Switzerland, the numerous connections offered by “discount” airlines, and the relatively low cost of the “Palexpo” in Geneva.

The committee of the SSN decided a few months ago not to prepare a bid, mainly due to the concern that the organization of such a large meeting would represent an unprecedented challenge for our Society. Considering, however, that the SSN is the fifth largest member Society of the FENS, and that a FENS meeting might indirectly benefit from the large publicity generated by the Euro 2008 football championship, as seen this year in Portugal, we would like to know the opinion of our members.

The bid prepared four years ago provides a good basis for a second trial, and a strong support can be expected from the responsible authorities in Geneva. However, if the bid is presented and accepted, the commitment will be real for the organizers!

You can participate to the poll by answering the questions on the next page and returning it by fax to: SSN – 01 635 6874. Thank you in advance for your participation.

**The Future of the FENS meeting:**

1) The SSN should present a bid for organizing the 6<sup>th</sup> European Forum of Neuroscience in Geneva in 2008:

- I fully agree
- I agree under certain conditions (see comments)
- I have no opinion
- I disagree

2) How should a local organizing committee be constituted?

- I agree to participate (*please give us your name and coordinates*)
- The SSN council should form a search committee

3) If a bid is presented and accepted by the FENS general council, I would be interested to participate to the organization

- yes (*please give us your name and coordinates*)
- no

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Comments (optional)

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Name and e-mail address (optional)

Return by fax to : SSN – 01 635 6874