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Contents

- Editorial
 - SSN Annual Meeting: [March 26 2011 in Basel](#)
 - SSN Honorary Member 2011: [Beat Gähwiler](#)
 - Brain Awareness Week: [March 14-19, 2011](#)
-

Editorial

Dear SSN members,

This year's Annual Meeting is going to take place at the Zentrum für Lehre und Forschung (ZLF) in Basel on March 26. The Local Organising Committee, chaired by Pico Caroni organized an excellent programme. Please note that the registration and abstract submission is still open. If you have not yet done, please register on our website, since this is necessary for our planning. Deadline for abstract submission is **March 15!** As a member the participation is for free as long as you have paid your 2011 membership fee.

This is my last SSN Newsletter, as my mandate of President of the SSN is reaching its term at the end of the Annual Meeting in Basel. During the ten years spent in the council of the SSN (four years as regular member, two years as Secretary, two years as President-elect and the last two years as President), I enjoyed the opportunity to work together with many colleagues participating in the promotion of Neuroscience in Switzerland; a task which is the main focus of the SSN. Along with this notion I am very glad that the financial support for the Brain Awareness Week is now secured due to the support of our members who agreed on the increase of the membership fees and the generous financial support of the Swiss Academy of Medical Science. Further I am pleased that in the last two years an increase of applications for the Best Publication Award as well as for the SSN-IBRO Fellowship occurred, indicating that these awards gained visibility and are becoming more and more attractive.

The transition to the new SSN council will take place on the occasion of our annual meeting in Basel during the Assembly meeting. The President-elect, Esther Stöckli, will become President of the SSN. I want to take this occasion to acknowledge the great contribution of the SSN council officers during the last two years (Christoph Michel as Secretary and Egbert Welker as Treasurer), supporting me so much in my mandate of President of the SSN. To ensure a smooth transition, in addition to the Presidency of Esther Stöckli, two members of the SSN council kindly accepted the mandate as officers, namely Egbert Welker pursuing as Treasurer and Pierre Lavenex as Secretary. Many thanks go to all other members of the SSN council, especially those leaving the council at the end of their mandate: Carmen Sandi and René Muri.

Nicole Schaeren-Wiemers

President SSN

SSN Annual Meeting in 2011: March 26 in Basel

The 15th Annual Meeting of the SSN will take place in Basel, Saturday March 26. It takes place in the Zentrum für Lehre und Forschung (ZLF), University Hospital Basel, Hebelstrasse 20, 4031 Basel.



The program comprises of a **plenary lecture** in the morning on “*Fundamentals of general theory of addiction*” by Pier Vincenzo Piazza followed by two parallel **symposia** on “*Cognition*” and “*From Circuits and Behaviour*”. During the **poster session** lunch will be provided, allowing young members to present their research projects and facilitating scientific discussions in a pleasant atmosphere. The posters will be evaluated and three will be chosen for the **Volker Henn Best Poster Prize** honored at the Award ceremony. At 13:00 o'clock the **Assembly meeting** will take place to which **every** SSN members is welcome. At this meeting **election of the President elect** will take place and thereafter Esther Stöckli will take over her mandate as President. In the afternoon the two parallel **symposia** on “*Genetics and Cell Biology of Neurodevelopmental Disorders*” and “*Learning and Memory*” followed by the **plenary lecture** on “*Precise function of neuronal circuits controlling motor behavior*” by Silvia Arber will complete our scientific program. The Annual meeting will be closed with the **Award ceremony** during which the winner of the **Best Publication Award** as well as the winners of the Volker Henn best poster prizes will be honored. The third highlight of this ceremony will be the tribute to this year's **Honorary member**.

Right after the annual meeting the **15th Anniversary Symposium** will take place. The Swiss Society for Neuro-science was launched in 1996 by the initiation of Prof. Volker Henn (Zurich). At its creation, the SSN inherited about 250 members. Today there are around 800 members making the SSN the fifth largest society of Europe. The invited speakers Martin Schwab, Pierre Magistretti, Yilmaz Aysim and Stephanie Clarke will display their view on the opportunities and challenges for Swiss neuroscience.

Best Publication Award 2011

The SSN gives every year a prize for the best publication of a young SSN member, published in a peer-reviewed international journal. We received **9 applications** for this prestigious award, aiming at distinguishing an outstanding publication of a young neuroscientist member of the SSN (Ph.D. Student or 1st year of a post-doc) published between December 1, 2009 and November 30, 2010. This is again a high number of applications reflecting the high standard of scientific activity in Switzerland.

This award amounts to **CHF 4'000.-** and will be presented on the occasion of the SSN Annual Meeting in Basel.

Honorary Member 2011

The SSN council has the great pleasure to announce this year's nomination: **Prof. Beat Gähwiler**. For most of the SSN members, this nomination is an obvious choice; a small summary of Beat's CV and his wide outreach for Swiss and International Neuroscience illustrates this. Beat Gähwiler was born in 1940 (Zug) and studied physics at the University of Fribourg and biophysics at the University of Basel. He did his doctorate in the Laboratory for Medical Physics, Dept. of



Radiology at the Medical Center of the University of Basel. In 1970, he became acting director of this laboratory. He subsequently opted for the sunny side of this planet by studying biophysical properties of membranes at the University of California, Berkeley where he became research associate in 1972. At Berkeley he acquainted himself with neuronal cell cultures and the way to record their bioelectrical activity. In 1973, he was nominated head of a research laboratory within the preclinical research centre of Sandoz, Basel. During the period, he published the first key papers on electrical activity and neurotransmitter receptors in slice cultures. In 1979, he obtained his habilitation at the University of Basel. In 1987, Beat joined the Brain Research Institute of Zürich, where he became full professor and developed the organotypic cell culture technique to perfection, contributing landmark studies in the field of synaptic transmission and plasticity. He was for several periods (co-)director of this institute. Since 2005 he is emeritus professor of the University of Zürich.

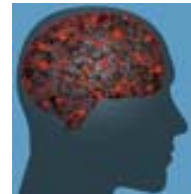
Through the 183 full papers published, Beat has contributed to the disclosure of fundamental aspects of neuronal communication and synaptic integration. His studies cover various brain areas – cerebellum, hypothalamus, hippocampus and cerebral cortex. The *in vitro* methods that he developed have become standard tools in neuroscience laboratories worldwide. Beat is an active member in a large number of research foundations and advisory boards around the whole world. He has formed and coached an impressive number of students; many of whom

became leaders in their own field of neuroscience.

The inauguration will take place during the SSN Award Ceremony at the annual meeting March 26 at the ZLF in Basel.

Brain Awareness Week 2011

Brain Awareness Week (BAW) is the **global campaign** to increase public awareness about the progress and benefits of brain research. Every March BAW unites the efforts of universities, hospitals, patient groups, government agencies, schools, service organizations, and professional associations worldwide in a week-long celebration of brain research. Founded and coordinated originally by the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives and European Dana Alliance for the Brain, the SSN took over the coordination of the BAW in the year 2010. The realization was only possible due to the generous support of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences.



In Switzerland the BAW takes place since 14 years and helped to increase the public awareness for brain research significantly.

This year the BAW will take place from **March 14 to 19** in **Aarau, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Zürich and in Basel** from March 21 to 24. Information about the program is provided on the website:

http://www.swissneuroscience.ch/activities/Brain_Awareness_Week



Annual Meeting of the Swiss Society for Neuroscience

26th March 2011

ZLF, grosser und kleiner Hörsaal, Hebelstrasse 20, 4056 Basel

Program

09:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks Nicole Schaeren-Wiemers, President SSN

09:40-10:25 Plenary Lecture 1 Pier Vincenzo Piazza, Bordeaux
Drugs or individuals? Fundamentals of a general theory of addiction

10:30-11:45 Parallel Symposia

Symposium 1: Cognition

Chaired by: Andreas Papassotiropoulos, Basel
Olaf Blanke, Lausanne
Neuroscience of the first-person perspective
Patrik Vuilleumier, Geneva
From vision to social neuroscience
Dominique de Quervain, Basel
Stress, genes and memory

Symposium 2: From Circuits to Behaviour

Chaired by: Pico Caroni, Basel
German Sumbre, Paris
Visual processing in the zebrafish larva
Botond Roska, Basel
The busy life of neural circuits in the retina
Hanns Ulrich Zeilhofer, Zurich
Inhibitory interneurons in spinal pain processing

11:45-14:00 Poster Session with Lunch

13:00-13:30 SSN Business Meeting: Welcome of the new president of the SSN Esther Stöckli

14:00-15:15 Parallel Symposia

Symposium 3: Genetics and Cell Biology of Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Chaired by: Peter Scheiffele, Basel
Thomas Bourgeron, Paris
How to get a social "synaptic" network in the brain: Insights from the genetics of autism spectrum disorders
Dominique Muller, Geneva
Alteration of synaptic network development by the mental retardation gene PAK3
Claudia Bagni, Leuven/Rome
mRNA metabolism and spine dysfunctions in Fragile X syndrome and autism spectrum disorder

Symposium 4: Learning and Memory

Chaired by: Andreas Lüthi, Basel
Ad Aertsen, Freiburg
From networks to networks of networks
Richard Hahnloser, Zurich
How the songbird brain listens to and evaluates its own songs
Christian Lüscher, Geneva
Network adaptations underlying compulsive drug seeking

15:30-16:15 Plenary lecture 2 Silvia Arber, Basel
Precision and function of neuronal circuits controlling motor behavior

16:15-16:25 Award Ceremony Best publication award, Volker Henn best poster price, Honorary member

16:25-16:45 Coffee Break

16:45-18:15 15th Anniversary Symposium: "Opportunities and Challenges for Swiss Neuroscience"

Chaired by: Esther Stoekli
Martin Schwab (Zurich)
Pierre Magistretti (Lausanne)
Yilmaz Aysim (SNF)
Stephanie Clarke (Lausanne, SNF)