

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting and Education Day

By Daniel Cahill, MD, PhD

We are only days away from the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting and Education Day of the Society for Neuro-Oncology, to be held November 17-20, 2011, in Orange County, California. This year, the meeting will be held in conjunction with the AANS/CNS Section on Tumors, and we are looking forward to this added neurosurgical component further enhancing this already highly educational meeting. Congratulations are due to meeting chairs Dr. Tim Cloughesy and Dr. Michael Vogelbaum for their efforts in assembling a comprehensive program highlighting cutting-edge laboratory and clinical research in the field of neuro-oncology. The meeting promises to be a unique environment for the multidisciplinary exchange of ideas among clinician and laboratory scientists in the fields of neuro-oncology, medical oncology, neurosurgery, neuropathology, radiation oncology, neuroradiology, pediatrics, nursing and other specialties involved in the research, diagnosis, care and treatment of patients with central nervous system tumors.

On Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, the pre-meeting will begin with a timely and relevant program for Education Day, with a morning session focused on Stereotactic Radiosurgery, and concurrent afternoon sessions on Quality of Life / Symptom Management and a Clinical Trials Course for Young Investigators. That night, the meeting commences with the SNO official welcome reception.

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The 2011 meeting will be held in Orange County, California

On Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> starts with Sunrise Sessions on Viral Gene Therapy, Cancer Cell Metabolism, Surgery for non-malignant skull base tumors, and Advances in Neuro-Imaging. After the Official Meeting Welcome by Dr. Cloughesy and Dr. Vogelbaum, the Top-Scoring Abstracts will be presented. This morning session will be followed by an address from SNO president Dr. Frederick Lang, followed by the Victor Levin Award and Lecture by Dr. Kenneth Aldape of the MD Anderson Cancer Center.

We look forward to a Young Investigators Luncheon Roundtable at noon on Friday. Senior trainees and early phase independent investigators are invited to participate in informal discussions with senior investigators at roundtables organized in eight different areas: Neurosurgery, Neurology, Adult Neuro-Oncology, Pediatric Neuro-Oncology, Pathology, Allied Health Sciences, Basic Science, and Translational Science.

These luncheon symposia will be followed by afternoon concurrent sessions on Immunology and Cell

*Continued on page 3*

## From the President

Dear Colleagues,

With this newsletter, I approach the end of my two-year tenure as President of SNO. These two years have shown me that SNO is, quite simply, an amazing organization. SNO's members are outstanding individuals dedicated to volunteerism, excellence, and a spirit of multi-disciplinary cooperation that is unmatched by other organizations. The chairs of each of the committees have done superior jobs. The members of the Board of Directors have consistently provided sage advice. Vice President Patrick Wen and Treasurer Mike Vogelbaum have done yeoman's work through their 2-year terms. Chas Haynes, Jan Essenwien and Linda Greer have provided steady, effective and efficient administrative guidance. So, as my term approaches its end, I extend my thanks to all of these individuals and to all the members of SNO for making my time as president so rewarding.



Frederick Lang, MD

One of the goals of my presidency has been to extend a cooperative hand to other like-minded organizations in the USA and internationally. The wisdom of SNO is its inclusion of multiple disciplines, and I have always thought that other organizations should benefit from this wisdom. In this context, over the past two years SNO's influence has extended to several national organizations. Indeed, our next Annual Meeting, which is highlighted in this newsletter, will be held in Anaheim, California, Nov 17-21, 2011 in conjunction with the Section on Tumors (SOT) of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS). The SOT represents the largest group of organized neurosurgeons dedicated to oncology, and their presence at our annual meeting is a testament to the impact SNO is having on other sub-specialties. Similarly, this year SNO partnered with the American Society of Neuro-Radiology (ASNR) to sponsor a neuro-oncology symposium at the 2011 ASNR Annual Meeting. This relationship will continue into 2012

and hopefully beyond. SNO has also worked with the American Association of Neurology (AAN) to develop educational sessions for our meetings. Lastly, thanks to a generous grant from the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTF), SNO organized its first "boutique" meeting entitled the Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Basic and Translational Research Conference in May, 2010, in New Orleans. James Rutka was the Scientific Chair of this outstanding meeting, and we anticipate that this meeting will become a regular biennial event for our Society.

The influence of SNO has also extended internationally. SNO now awards eight travel scholarships for international members to attend our annual meetings, and in 2010, SNO awarded its second International Outreach Research Fellowship to Dr. Jun-Ping Zhang, from China. Most impressively, international neuro-oncologists are emulating SNO; in the past year the Korean Society for Neuro-Oncology (KSNO) formalized their charters based on the SNO model. A special recognition symposium of KSNO will be held at our 2011 Annual Meeting. Also, SNO members will be major participants in the 2012 meeting of the evolving Indian Society for Neuro-Oncology (ISNO). This spirit of internationalism has kindled new cooperation that has resulted in the creation of the World Federation on Neuro-Oncology Committee (WFNOC) that includes representatives from SNO, the European Association of Neuro-Oncology (EANO), the Asian Society of Neuro-Oncology (ASNO) as well as members from other national societies. Susan Chang, immediate Past-President of SNO, will be the first SNO representative to the WFNOC.

So as I finish my term, I thank all the members of SNO for your support throughout the past two years. I hope that I have helped further the mission of this august society. I end my term confident that SNO will continue to lead the way and provide a model of cooperation that will ultimately result in a cure of CNS tumors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frederick F. Lang, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frederick Lang

## *The 2011 Victor Levin Award and Lecture in Neuro-Oncology Research: Dr. Kenneth Aldape*

The Victor Levin Award and Lecture is named in honor of SNO's founder, Dr. Victor Levin. This award is given each year to an individual with a career commitment to neuro-oncology who has demonstrated leadership and, through scientific innovation, has made extraordinary achievements in neuro-oncology research. The award is open to all SNO members, from all disciplines and in any stage of their professional career. The Victor Levin Award winner delivers a plenary lecture during the SNO annual meeting and receives a \$5000 award drawn from the Victor Levin Founder's Society Fund.

The Society for Neuro-Oncology is pleased to announce that the 2011 recipient of this honor is Dr. Kenneth Aldape. In addition to his many scientific accomplishments, Dr. Aldape has served in a number of leadership positions within SNO, and was recently named as president-elect. He is a professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he also holds the Kenneth D. Mueller Professorship in Tumor Genetics. Dr. Aldape will present the 2011 Victor Levin Lecture during the first plenary session at the annual meeting on Friday, November 18, in Orange County, California.



Kenneth Aldape, MD

*Annual Meeting, continued from page 1.*

Biology/Microenvironment, and subsequent concurrent sessions on Radiology and Preclinical Studies. After industry-sponsored satellite symposia, the evening will be open for poster sessions, which always offer the opportunity for lively discussion and debate.

Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> Sunrise Sessions feature Brain Cancer Cells of Origin, Intraoperative Surgical Adjuncts for Visualizing Tumor, Neurological Complications of Cancer Therapy in the CNS, and Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Gliomas and other pediatric astrocytic tumors. These are followed by a plenary session presenting Top Scoring Abstracts. The first afternoon concurrent sessions are "-omics" and Pediatrics, and

the subsequent afternoon concurrent sessions on Quality of Life and Surgical Therapies. The second poster session will take place after the oral sessions conclude for the day. That evening, the SNO Banquet promises to be a social highlight of the meeting.

Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> Sunrise Sessions include Molecular Pathology, Atypical and Malignant Meningioma, and Immunobiology. These are followed by a plenary session on Medical and Neuro-Oncology with a Clinical Trials update prior to the meeting adjournment.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Orange County for this exciting meeting program!

## International Outreach

By Jonathan L. Finlay, MB, ChB

The International Outreach Committee (IOC) was established in late 2006 with the expressed goal of promoting clinical and research activities in the management of children and adults with brain tumors in developing regions of the world. The major means to achieve these goals were considered to be through the facilitation of educational opportunities and exchanges, and through the development of collaborations between brain tumor specialists in high-income countries and their counterparts in developing countries.

Clearly, the above goals represent formidable challenges, particularly in the current climate of global economic difficulties. Nevertheless, over the course of the last five years, the IOC and its participating members have succeeded in enacting some small but positive steps in the right direction. These can be best summarized as follows:

1. The sharing of educational materials through the SNO web-site and through links with other web-sites.
2. Making over 1000 free or reduced-rate on-line subscriptions to the SNO journal, *Neuro-Oncology*, available to individuals and institutions in WHO-defined low-income (low per capita GNP) countries.
3. The establishment of competitively-awarded International Education Travel Fellowships for individuals from low-income countries to receive travel grants towards attendance at the SNO annual meeting, first established in 2007 (see sidebar on next page).

4. The establishment of an annual competitively-awarded SNO International Research Fellowship to permit international professionals from low-income countries to perform clinical, translational or basic research in the field of neuro-oncology in the United States or Canada. Since the establishment of this Fellowship, we have supported two fellows, both trainees from China in the field of clinical trial development from China.

THE SOCIETY FOR NEURO ONCOLOGY INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

The SNO International Research Fellowship is made possible through a generous grant from the American Brain Tumor Association and EMD Serono

American Brain Tumor Association  
Where compassion meets commitment

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5. The establishment of an hour-long open IOC meeting at each SNO annual meeting since 2007, at which invited speakers from many low-income countries as well as others recognized for their work in neuro-oncology global health, have presented on the current status of care of brain tumor patients in their countries, and loco-regional specific strategies to improve such care.

6. The integration of SNO outreach efforts with other European and Asian neuro-oncology societies is ongoing. Furthermore, an IOC initiative to assist South American colleagues in the establishment of a South American Neuro-oncology Society with affiliation with SNO is underway, with the intent that formal launching will occur in conjunction with a first-ever Pan-South/Central American Neuro-oncology Conference to be held in Brazil in 2016.
7. The identification of individuals, either residing within different low-income regions of the globe or having specific interests and involvement in neuro-oncology care in those regions, to attempt to build a "patchwork" of collaborations between low-income and low-income brain tumor health care providers. This has proven the most difficult goal of all to achieve. In truth, many individuals from developed countries already involved in collaborations with institutions or

## SNO International Travel Scholarships

To date, the SNO International Outreach Committee has awarded travel scholarships to the SNO annual meeting to physicians from the following countries:

Algeria	Mauritanie
China	Namibia
Columbia	Nepal
Cuba	Panama
Egypt	Pakistan
Georgia	Russia
India	Serbia
Indonesia	Thailand
Kyrgyzstan	Venezuela

organizations, for example, in China, India, South or Central America or North America, have continued to do so, their success or failure being largely independent of any IOC efforts.

As a consequence, some of the previously most poorly-supported and poorest regions remain largely unsupported in these endeavors.

Accordingly, in an effort to try to redress the imbalances and inequalities in the care of patients with brain tumors in many low-income regions and countries, the IOC proposes launching at the upcoming SNO annual meeting in Anaheim, California, in November 2011, a “central triaging office” through which (a) individuals or institutions in developed countries can apply to be connected or “twinned” with a low-income country and (b) individuals or (preferably) institutions in developing countries can request such “twinning” partnerships with institutions in developed countries. The IOC will draw upon the expertise of regional specialists to assist in determining, based on linguistic, cultural and other determinants, which institutions would serve as “best fits” for “twinning”. This is not a new concept for medical societies to enact and, for example, the International Hemophilia Association has established such a triage system highly

successfully for several years now. Formal notices on how to apply for such “twinning” opportunities will be provided at the SNO Annual Meeting in November in California.

In conclusion, the problem is huge. SNO cannot possibly take on this effort with the expectation of any real measure of success alone; but through facilitation of partnerships between low-income and high-income countries, and the extension of our already active training opportunities, we can assist in making a few small steps forward.

**SNO members are encouraged to join an open meeting in the International Outreach Committee, scheduled to take place during the annual meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 1:00pm in the Harbor Room at the Hyatt Recency Hotel.**

## Young Investigator’s Round Table Luncheon

Building on the success of the 2010 event, SNO will again offer a special ‘Young Investigators and Mentors Luncheon’ that will be held during the SNO annual meeting, on Friday, November 18th, from noon to 1:00pm. The goal of the luncheon is to provide subspecialty specific career advice, and mentorship to young investigators as they embark on independent careers in neuro-oncology. Young investigators are invited to register to attend the lunch, and to choose one of the following career categories:

1. Neurosurgery
2. Neurology
3. Adult Neuro-oncology
4. Pediatric Neuro-oncology
5. Pathology
6. Allied Health Sciences
7. Basic Science
8. Translational Science
9. Radiation Oncology

To register, please email Jan Eesenwein and include your preferred category: [jan@soc-neuro-onc.org](mailto:jan@soc-neuro-onc.org).

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## Membership Committee

*By Gregory Foltz*

SNO continues to be the pre-eminent multidisciplinary neuro-oncology society dedicated to improving patient outcomes through state-of-the-art neuro-oncology research, education, and patient care. This success is dependent on the breadth, diversity and engagement of SNO membership. Currently, SNO has 1153 members which includes 980 Full members, 48 Associate members, and 125 Trainee members. This membership encompasses the diversity of disciplines that impact neuro-oncology with representation by neurosurgery (16%), neuro-oncology (24%), radiation oncology (8%), basic sciences (9%), medical oncology (5%), pediatric oncology (5%), pathology (5%) and other disciplines including radiology, psychology, pharmacology, epidemiology, statistics, nursing and public health (each < 1%). The future growth and success of SNO will be dependent on reaching out to interested individuals in each of these disciplines to inform them of the advantages of SNO membership.

The Membership Committee is primarily charged with developing initiatives and recommendations for the Board of Directors concerning efforts to promote and increase membership in the Society. As part of its routine activities, the committee reviews all applicants for membership and occasionally evaluates member's professional conduct if requested by a majority of the Board of Directors. Currently, there are three levels of membership in SNO. Full membership requires a doctorate-level degree and a commitment to neuro-oncology related practice or research. Associate memberships are available for those without doctorate-level degrees, and Trainee memberships are available to those in scientific or clinical training. Full or Associate memberships are \$200 per year and Trainee memberships are \$75 per year. Membership benefits include:

- Twelve monthly issues of Neuro-Oncology,
- Discount to the annual SNO Scientific Meeting and Education Day,
- Regular e-blasts and neuro-oncology news,
- Access to members-only section of the SNO website.

As we move forward, the Membership Committee will seek to enhance participation through outreach programs designed to raise awareness at professional meetings and through online affiliations with complementary professional societies. We would like to see increased participation by under-represented disciplines and encourage all members to reach out to their colleagues who are involved in the care of neuro-oncol-

ogy patients to encourage their participation and make them aware of the benefits available to them through active membership. This personal effort by each of you to reach out through professional colleagues and networks will be the key to continued growth in our high-quality and engaged membership. We encourage anyone interested in more information about outreach programs or participation in Membership Committee activities to contact [linda@soc-neuro-onc.org](mailto:linda@soc-neuro-onc.org).

## World Federation of Neuro-Oncology Committee Report

*By Susan Chang*

To enhance Neuro-Oncology collaborative efforts worldwide, the World Federation of Neuro-Oncology Committee (WFNOC) has been formed. This committee consists of the Presidents of the respective international societies that are the official endorsers of the journal, Neuro-Oncology, (Society of Neuro-Oncology-SNO, European Association of Neuro-Oncology-EANO and the Asian Society of Neuro-Oncology-ASNO) as well as additional members from the respective regional societies.

The European Federation of Neurological Societies meeting held in Stockholm in September 2011 was the venue of the first WFNOC meeting. This was in follow-up to an initial meeting of the members of the SNO and EANO held at the ASCO meeting earlier this year. Graciously hosted by Dr. Wolfgang Grisold, the President of EANO, the meeting was attended by Dr. Susan Chang representing SNO, and Dr. Masao Matsutani representing ASNO. Each society briefly reviewed their mission and infrastructure as well as the educational activities. Discussion about shared and collaborative initiatives included increasing the access to Neuro-Oncology currently widely available to members of SNO, EANO and the Japanese Society of Neuro-Oncology, to members of the expanding ASNO. There was also discussion about the organization of the World Federation of Neuro-Oncology meeting held every 4 years and hosted by the respective societies. The next WFNOC meeting will be held in San Francisco from November 20 to 24, 2013 and planning has already begun to ensure international participation in the selection and presentation of topics of the open sessions. There was also significant interest in formalizing an international fellowship program to facilitate the exchange of trainees as well as the attendance at the society meetings. Further discussions will continue among the members of the WFNOC at the annual SNO meeting in Anaheim in 2011.

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## **Conference Report: 2011 Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Basic and Translational Research Conference May 19-20, 2011**

### **New Orleans, Louisiana**

*By James Rutka*

The 2011 Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Basic and Translational Research Conference took place at the Loews Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana May 19-20, 2011. The Conference was coordinated through the efforts of the Society for Neuro-Oncology, with a generous grant from the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTF).

Some 200 clinicians, clinician-scientists, scientists, trainees and students attended this meeting. There were participants from over 13 countries around the world. There were platform and poster presentations in addition to Sunrise Sessions where attendees could “Meet the Experts” in the field. The Sunrise Sessions included topics such as diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, molecular insights at the crossroads of neurodevelopment in tumorigenesis, translating the genomics of pediatric brain tumors into routine clinical practice, stem cells in pediatric brain tumors, and understanding treatment resistance and recurrence in pediatric brain tumors. A host of superb speakers was selected for these Sunrise sessions, and they were very well attended.

The Scientific Session on Thursday May 19<sup>th</sup> was divided into sessions on the genetics and basic biology of pediatric brain tumors, stem cells in translational therapeutics, pediatric brain tumor models and immunology, and high grade glioma and ependymomas. A major focus on the first day was on the BRAF fusion gene in tumors such as pilocytic astrocytoma. It has only been in the past 2 years that the importance of BRAF has been fully appreciated in pediatric brain tumors, and this Scientific Session offered some of the latest research and models on this topic.

The session on stem cells covered neural progenitor cells in conditions like neurofibromatosis-1 model systems in mouse and tissue culture, and develop-

mental pathway driven tumors such as the hedgehog pathway in medulloblastoma. The session on brain tumor models focused on medulloblastoma, pilocytic astrocytoma, and tumors found in tuberous sclerosis complex. An outstanding presentation was given on the creation of a novel pilocytic astrocytoma model in mice using activated BRAF. The afternoon session on high grade gliomas and ependymomas had research papers on angiogenesis, growth factor activating pathways including IGF-1R and PGF-Ra/b, and genomic alterations especially in ependymoma. A provocative presentation on screening of tumor neural stem cells revealed potential new treatments for ependymoma.

On Friday May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the day began with a Scientific Session on medulloblastoma, and several presentations were given which elucidated how far the research has gone with respect to increasing our understanding of the molecular biology of this particular tumor type. Large numbers of medulloblastoma samples have been analyzed in an international consortium that has provided the latest and most up to date genetic cataloging of major changes in medulloblastoma.

The late morning session continued on the theme of medulloblastoma, and research areas such as micro-RNAs, thrombospondin-1, SGK-1, FSTL5, FBWX7 and H1 were discussed with many of these genes serving as novel targets in this tumor.

From SNO, I should like to thank Frederick Lang, President, Chas Haynes, Executive Director, Linda Greer and Jan Esenwein for all their assistance and encouragement. From the PBTF, I should like to thank Dianne Traynor, Executive Director and President, for her support, and continued interest in bringing together the best and brightest individuals working in the field of pediatric neuro-oncology.

The meeting was considered a great success, and a model of its kind for future meetings. Given how rapidly the field is changing, and how enthusiastic attendees were with this Conference, planning is now underway for the next meeting scheduled to take place in the Spring of 2013.

**Congratulations to the incoming 2012 SNO  
Officers and Board Members**

*President: Kenneth Aldape  
Vice President: Michael Vogelbaum  
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Neuro-Oncology Representative: David Reardon  
Medical Oncology Representative: David Peereboom  
Basic Science Representative: Russ Pieper  
Pediatrics Representative: Eric Bouffet  
Other Specialties Representative: Mary Lovely*

## SNO Foundation President to Step Down

Serving as the founder and initial president of the SNO Foundation, Edward Shaw is stepping down from the Foundation board after seven years of service to our Society. It was Dr. Shaw's vision that led to the creation of the SNO Foundation, the primary fundraising vehicle for SNO. Dr. Shaw's contribution to SNO has been immeasurable, both in regard to his work with the Foundation, and serving in a variety of other leadership positions within SNO, including one term as president from 2002-2003. In the coming months, the SNO board will consider an appropriate acknowledgement of his extraordinary contributions to the Society and to the field of neuro-oncology.

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The Society for NeuroOncology

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