**NBTS Business Meeting Minutes**

**June 26, 2012**

**Baltimore, MD**

The business meeting was called to order by NBTS President Gale Richardson.

**Secretary’s Report**

The minutes from the 2011 Business meeting, provided by NBTS Secretary Lori Driscoll, were distributed in attendees’ registration bags. The membership was given the opportunity for comments and questions. The minutes from last year’s Business meeting were approved by the membership. Lori presented the breakdown of registrations for the current meeting. This year we have 75 registrants, which is slightly down from 78 in Louisville but is in line with previous years. Membership approved the Secretary’s report.

**President’s Report**

Gale began by listing the most significant successes for NBTS and the President over the past year. She thanked NBTS members who helped to contribute to this year’s program. Coordination with the Teratology Society on this year’s meeting program took place earlier than has been done in the past. Also, Kim Grant helped with coordinating with TS on this year’s National Children’s Study session. This, coupled with helpful TS headquarters staff, enabled NBTS to have increased input this year. Gale, President-Elect Chip Vorhees, and TS Liaison Patricia Janulewicz have already met with TS to help coordinate for future years.

Many thanks were given to the Nominations Committee for working very hard to find a complete slate of candidates for the elected offices; to the Awards Committee for their careful deliberations on the New Investigator and Conference Awards; to our active Public Affairs Committee, who collaborated on a society statement regarding the Teratology Society iodine paper, and on an outline for a manuscript on the effects of cannabis in pregnancy; and to Mary Gilbert for compiling the much-awaited Officer/Chair Handbook.

Several challenges also faced the Society this year. It has been difficult to find members who are willing to serve in high-effort positions in the organization, such as the office of Secretary (we had only one candidate for this position this year). To counter this problem, we have already begun to select candidates for President from our previous Presidents. We need to research the possibility of contracting out some of our administrative tasks (which fall on the shoulders of our officers) to TS headquarters. This may become part of our investigation into possible closer collaborations with TS, which is being pursued by Chip.

Meeting costs continue to climb, making it difficult to balance our budget. Hotel services are rapidly becoming more expensive, so Gale was particularly mindful of cutting expenses at the meeting this year. Bruce Beyer is incoming chair of the Finance committee; Gale has already met with him and President-Elect Chip Vorhees to talk about strategies to increase donations. On a positive note, the society is saving money by switching to electronic subscriptions to *Neurotoxicology and Teratology* for its members. Several members also solicited donations from their institutions and organizations; Gale thanked these individuals.

New and ongoing initiatives include successful coordination with the International Neurotoxicology Association for a joint meeting in 2015, thanks to Ed Levin, Ginger Moser, Phil Bushnell, and Merle Paule; and the Strategic Planning Committee, which met on Monday morning to continue to discuss the future scope of our society. All members are welcome to join in future meetings.

Gale provided a brief preview of future meeting sites: Tucson, AZ in 2013; Bellevue, WA in 2014; Montreal, Canada in 2015 (with INA); and San Antonio, TX in 2016. She thanked the outgoing officers for their efforts, and paid tribute to past NBTS President Patricia Rodier, who passed away in 2012. Finally, she reminded those who RSVPed for this year’s social event to meet at Vaccaro’s Tuesday evening.

The President’s report was approved by membership.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer’s report was presented by Helen Sable, who first thanked Susan Rice, Lori Driscoll, and Gale Richardson for helping her with the officer transition. Overall, the NBTS Treasury is healthy, although we continue to face a number of challenges with decreased government funding and corporate donations and increased meeting costs. However, to our financial benefit, we have switched to PayPal for online payments and electronic-only access for member NTT subscriptions this year.

This year we have brought in $12K in donations, which is just over half of what we received in 2011, and $12K in registration fees, which is slightly higher than what we received last year. By the end of the year we will break even, and we might even have a slight profit. Estimated treasury for the end of the year is just under $90K.

The Treasurer’s report was approved by membership.

**Finance Committee Report**

Helen also presented the Finance Committee report, as Stacey Germann could not be present. Information about donations was incomplete as of the time of the meeting, but the list of known donors was presented in the PowerPoint presentation, and a last-minute donation by Charles River was acknowledged verbally. To that point, known corporate donations totaled $11,050, and individual donations from 15 members totaled $904.74. These numbers do not include the TBD support funding for the BTS symposium.

The Finance Committee report was approved by membership.

**Nominations Committee Report**

Kimberly Grant, Nominations Chair, congratulated our new officers: President-Elect Tom Burbacher, Secretary Ginger Moser, Council member Jane Adams, and Publications Committee members Sherry Ferguson, Susan Schantz, Gregg Stanwood, and Lori Driscoll. The committee was very pleased with the people who offered to run, but it was incredibly difficult to fill the ballot this year. In order to provide effective leadership, we needed to draw within the pool of past Presidents. We were very lucky that Ginger Moser was so well-qualified to run for Secretary. There is excellent talent within our society, but high-effort positions will be very hard to fill in upcoming years, and this reflects our stagnant membership. Another challenge is our low voter turnout of 38%; we can do better. Kim encouraged all of membership to vote in future years.

Membership approved the Nominations Committee report.

**Membership Report**

Sherry Ferguson presented the Membership report on behalf of Ginger Moser. Currently NBTS has approximately 140 members, including 13 who have not yet paid 2012 dues. This is about the same as last year. As was the case with last year, the committee made explicit efforts to contact non-payers. Eleven individuals were identified; of these, three paid their dues, another two said they would but never did, one was retiring, and we received no response from the remaining five. The ones who have not paid have since been removed from the membership rolls. Ginger contacted NTT editorial board members to see if they would be interested in joining the society; this effort resulted in one Full membership application. Sue Makris suggested that we also contact invited speakers from each year’s meeting to see if they are interested in joining.

Eight individuals applied for membership this year—five for Full membership and three for Associate membership. All applicants were approved by a vote of Membership.

* **Full membership**
  + Kim Ehman
  + Rina Eiden
  + Robert Tanguay
  + Benedict Green
  + Muneyuki Miyagawa
* **Associate membership**
  + Kaitlyn Maier
  + Tommy Saborido
  + Jenna Fielding

As has been the case in the past three years, our Elsevier Distinguished Lecturer, this year Linda Patia Spear, will be given a one-year honorary membership.

Membership approved the report.

**Awards Committee Report**

Jerry Meyer presented the Awards Committee report. Originally the Committee planned to present the 2012 awards at the Social Event that evening; however, several of the award recipients were unable to attend the Social Event, so awards were distributed at the Business Meeting as has been done in the past.

This year, there were seven applications for Conference Awards and one for the Richard Butcher New Investigator Award. The committee unanimously recommended awarding the Richard Butcher New Investigator Award to Dr. Tori Schaefer (nominator Chip Vorhees) for her paper entitled “Neonatal Citalopram Treatment Inhibits the 5-HT Depleting Effects of MDMA Exposure in Rats”. Although all applications were deemed meritorious, the Society could only fund four Conference Awards: (1) Ramon Velazquez (nominator Barbara Strupp), (2) Dr. Brian Powers (nominator Barbara Strupp), (3) Jenna Fielding (nominator Helen Sable), and (4) Lindsay Silva (nominator Diana Dow-Edwards).

This year’s Best Predoctoral Presentation was awarded to Ramon Velazquez, and the Best Postdoctoral Presentation to Tori Schaefer. Both awardees will receive free NBTS membership for one year. Jerry thanked Phil Bushnell and Jennifer Willford for serving as co-judges for these awards.

The Awards Committee Report was approved by membership.

**Editor’s Report**

Editor Phil Bushnell described some of *Neurotoxicology and Teratology*’s major accomplishments of the past year. A Special Issue entitled *Zebrafish: Current discoveries and emerging technologies for neurobehavioral toxicology and teratology*, co-edited by Ed Levin and Robert Tanguay, was published. A database of subject-matter classifications was established in order to better match manuscript submissions with potential reviewers, and Editorial Advisory Board members were asked to classify their areas of expertise. The new NBTS Constitution and By-Laws were published. The flow and quality of manuscripts was maintained in comparison to previous years, although the journal is seeing more submissions in epidemiology and mechanistic work than in whole-animal work. Finally, the Editor was faced with two instances of plagiarized material, and also dealt with a “Clare Francis”, who accused the journal of publishing “unwarranted duplicate/highly overlapping publications”.

A Special Issue on Autism is in progress: *Environmental Influences and Emerging Mechanisms in the Etiology of Autism*. A possible 2013 issue on age-related susceptibility to chemicals is also being discussed. Phil also encouraged the members of the Publications Committee to submit suggestions for additional Special Issues.

Diana Dow-Edwards queried into some review articles that had been rejected. Phil said there was one for the zebrafish issue that had too many problems. One was plagiarized (see above), and one missed a deadline. Regarding the Special Issue on autism with Isaac Pessah, a question was raised as to whether the submission process was open. Phil indicated that Isaac was sending out specific invitations for contributions.

The Editor’s Report was approved by membership.

**Publications Committee Report**

John Chelonis, on behalf of Frank Scalzo, presented the Publications Committee report. The Committee met immediately prior to the Council meeting. The first item of discussion was the journal section reorganization; the question was raised as to why submissions appeared lower in some sections than others. At this time, John strongly encouraged members to submit more behavioral articles. Possible Special Issues topics for the future include heroin, environmental enrichment, and bath salts. Paul Eubig suggested that a review article on flame retardants be solicited, especially in light of new compounds being used. Sonya Sobrian described a project to provide warning labels on medical marijuana products, which was originally suggested by Diana Dow-Edwards. The committee endorsed the concept and the writing of a manuscript titled “Prenatal Cannabis Exposure: Developmental and Long-term Consequences” as a basis for the warning labels. The committee agreed to work with the NTT editor to assist when needed in providing assistance with article reviews where language issues were numerous.

Membership approved the Publications Committee Report.

**Public Affairs Committee Report**

The report was presented by Sonya Sobrian. She thanked the other members of the committee, and Diana Dow-Edwards, for their efforts this year. The committee was very active, engaging in two teleconferences and vigorous email communication about two issues. First, Gloria Jahnke of the Teratology Society asked Sue Makris if NBTS would support the recommendations of a position paper from the PAC of the TS on iodine deficiency in pregnancy that arose from a 2010 joint symposium. The paper is to be published in *Birth Defects Research.* Despite reservations of PAC members about the fact that the supporting document lacked scholarly merit and ignored the animal literature, the committee voted to support the recommendations because they were factual. The letter sent to Gloria read “…The position paper has been reviewed by Public Affairs Committee of the Neurobehavioral Teratology Society. We support the recommendations made in the paper and ask that our endorsement be indicated by the following statement: *The Public Affairs Committee of the Neurobehavioral Teratology Society supports the recommendations of this paper, that all pregnant and lactating women should ingest a total of 250 micrograms of iodine daily and take daily supplementation of 150 micrograms to achieve this goal."*

Second, Diana Dow-Edwards suggested that the PAC become involved in producing materials regarding the possible consequences of fetal exposure to marijuana. To this end, the PAC members and Diana are undertaking the task of writing of a review article. The goal of this paper is to influence public policy by providing a definitive evaluation of the risk of use of medical marijuana during pregnancy. Through a teleconference and e-mails, the committee produced an outline for the article, and PAC members volunteered to write various sections of the paper. Sonya encouraged contributions from members as well. The outline of the review will be sent to membership so people can choose sections to write. The PAC would like to receive drafts of sections by October 31, 2012.

Also, one duty of PAC is to recommend people with expertise to answer questions. We need to develop a survey similar to the NTT reviewer criteria in which people can fill out their areas of expertise.

Membership approved the PAC report.

**AAALAC Representative Report**

Sonya also presented the AAALAC Representative Report. She has just completed her second term as the Chair of the Board of Trustees [BOT]. The Guide has been implemented; AAALAC site visits based on the Guide began in September of 2011. During the last 12 months, AAALAC has developed answers to frequently asked questions [FAQs], posted revised position statements on the AAALAC website, held a series of webinars regarding implementation of the 2011 Guide and in general has increased educational efforts in this area. The Council on Accreditation has given accredited units 12 months to implement some changes mandated by the new Guide; Council members’ evaluations for animals facilities continue to be based on performance standards and professional standards rather than engineering standards. The enrichment section of the Guide is the most problematic, as it requires increased enrichment based on minimal data. NBTS could take leadership in studying this or creating meta-analyses of existing data.

The AAALAC Representative Report was approved by membership.

**Website Report**

Sherry Ferguson reported that website visits remain at a frequency similar to those in previous years, with the expected spikes during dues renewal season. The major change to the website this year was the conversion to using PayPal for dues and registrations payments, which presented some technical challenges that were worked out with Epoch Online.

Membership approved the Website Report.

**Website Redesign Committee Report**

Sherry Ferguson presented this report. Our organization has been unhappy with Epoch Online for years, so this ad hoc committee is in place to explore changing our hosting company and redoing the look of the site. In September 2011, Lori Driscoll solicited bids from website companies. Bids were received from (amount indicates redesign cost): 720MEDIA Web Design - $3600; Custom Management Group - $8477; Epoch Online (current website company) - $3100; Gecko Designs - $3650. The committee evaluated the bids, and the chair made contact with all companies via emails and phone calls and established a key person in each company who became familiar with our needs. Each committee member received the same spreadsheet of information regarding costs, CMS system, and additional information for each company and each member then individually ranked the companies. The rankings from each of the three members were identical, with Gecko Designs being the first choice for all committee members (Sherry, Devon Graham, and Melissa Bailey).

Sherry noted that the NBTS person handling the website will need to have the time and technical expertise to do content management system stuff. A standing committee will probably be required. If you like the look of a particular website, please send the link to Sherry. Membership was then solicited for suggestions for specific types of content. Suggestions included a tab for public information (like TS has); clearer access to information about previous meetings; a direct link to a document describing the benefits of membership; better visibility on Google; member research features (picture and blurb); members in the news; free article viewing from *NTT*? Can we work out a deal with *NTT*? Feed of Table of Contents of *NTT*. Link to Abstracts from each meeting visible under “Previous Meetings”.

Membership approved the Web Redesign Committee Report.

**Additional Business**

Ed Levin encouraged members to get in touch with him if they are interested in helping with the NBTS coordination with the International Neurotoxicology Association for the meeting in Montreal in 2015. INA is having their meeting in the Netherlands next year, and they have interest in behavior, molecular and cellular neurotoxicology. The overlap in interest with our society is great.

Tom Burbacher mentioned that the RSA is meeting in Seattle in 2014. So do we have any ongoing discussions with them? Gale will find out who the President is.

**Passing of the Torch**

Gale Richardson handed control of the meeting to the new President, Chip Vorhees. Chip thanked our outgoing officers and committee chairs, and he thanked Gale for her service to NBTS and for an outstanding scientific program this year.

Plans for the 2013 meeting in Tucson, AZ are underway. There will be two joint symposia with TS. The first, on prenatal infection/maternal immune activation as a cause of neuropsychiatric disorders, will feature Alan Brown from Columbia and Patricia Boksa from McGill. The second will be a tribute to Patty Rodier. Chris Stodgell has already accepted an invitation to speak; Miki Ashner and Mark Stanton will also be invited. For the Elsevier Distinguished Lecture, Pat Levitt at USC has been invited to speak on genes, brain development, and autism spectrum disorder. NBTS symposia include learning and memory tests for regulatory studies (suggested by Sue Makris); a BTS symposium chaired by Chris Newland at Auburn; and a possible symposium on neuroimaging as a companion to the general imaging symposium planned by TS. Suggestions for a fourth symposium are welcome.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Driscoll, Ph.D.

Secretary, NBTS