EDITORIAL

The 53rd Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology . . .
From Phoenix, Arizona

Gary W. Miller
Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia 30322
E-mail: gary.miller@toxicology.org.

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“I went from Phoenix, Arizona all the way to . . .”

Steve Miller

In late March of this year, The Society of Toxicology will hold its 53rd Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. Each year, several thousand toxicologists from around the world travel to this meeting to present their latest findings, discuss controversial topics, and connect with colleagues and collaborators. This year promises to be as exciting at those in the past. We are pleased to have Sir John Gurdon presenting the Plenary Lecture. Dr Gurdon shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 2012 for his ground-breaking work in the area of nuclear transfer. He also received the 2009 Lasker Award for Basic Medical Science for his research. His research has led to major advances in the methods used for nuclear transfer and paved the way for cloning. The promise of stem cell biology for toxicity testing derives from this earlier work of Dr Gurdon.

The Nobel is not a career prize. It is given for specific discoveries, in this case demonstrating that mature cells can be reprogrammed to a pluripotent form, but let’s look at the career of Dr Gurdon anyway. Dr Gurdon attended Oxford for his undergraduate and doctoral training. From there, he went to Caltech for post-doctoral studies. He returned to Oxford for several years before moving to the University of Cambridge, where he spent most of his academic career. His research findings were consistently published in top journals and were influential in the field. For example, he published a paper in 1971 on the introduction of mRNA into Xenopus oocytes (Gurdon et al., 1971). This is a technique now used by thousands of scientists (including many SOT members). In that paper, he wrote the rather prophetic line…

“This raises the possibility that the microinjection of messenger RNA (mRNA) into frog oocytes may constitute a generally useful experimental system for identifying and studying the translation of different kinds of mRNA.”

Remember, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for discovering that mature cells can be reprogrammed to become pluripotent. Although the Xenopus oocyte system was an important tool for his research and contributed the progression toward his Nobel discovery, it was not cited by the Nobel Committee. When one looks back at Nobel Laureates’ resumes, there is usually evidence of significant achievement and discovery before and after the prize-winning work.

Nobel Laureates are generally giants in their respective field and possess a level of creativity, inventiveness, and productivity that surpasses that of mere scientific mortals. I encourage my trainees to attend any lecture by a Nobel Laureate even if the topic seems to be unrelated to their discipline. Hearing their stories, their motivations, and their approaches allows the listener see that these distinguished scientists come from a variety of backgrounds and fields and have followed different paths in their careers. But the one thing that they all seem to have in common is a passion for their science. They love what they do (it is possible that the affirmation of the Nobel helps in this regard). If you learn nothing else from the Gurdon lecture regarding pluripotency and nuclear transfer, take that message home with you. Pursue your science with all of your being and energy. Developing a passion for the work makes it easier to survive through the rough times of failed experiments and difficult funding times. Make it an enjoyable exercise. While you may not end up in Stockholm, you will be rewarded for your tenacious efforts and dedication and be more likely to maintain your sanity.

The MRC Lecture will be given by John Scott of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Department of Pharmacology.
at the University of Washington. Dr Scott received his PhD at the University of Aberdeen and completed postdoctoral studies with Edwin Krebs at the University of Washington (Dr Krebs won the 1992 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for his research on the role of phosphorylation in cellular regulation, not to be confused with Hans Krebs of TCA cycle fame). Dr Scott will speak about the regulation of protein kinases and phosphatases, especially how anchoring proteins facilitate the positioning of these enzymes. These important pathways are likely to be vulnerable to disruption by a variety of toxicants. Dr Scott’s elegant cell biology is visually stunning, which should make for an informative and entertaining lecture.

FROM PRESENTATIONS TO PUBLICATIONS

There will also be dozens of symposia, workshops, and poster sessions that highlight recent research findings in toxicology. As the journal of the Society of Toxicology, *Toxicological Sciences* is a key outlet for the science that is presented at the national meeting. Sometimes, the findings are ready for publication soon after they are presented, sometimes it takes months or years for a complete story to be developed. Either way, toxicologists should view *Toxicological Sciences* as an ideal place to submit their work. The relationship between the Journal and the Society is symbiotic. The Journal relies on the Society membership to submit exciting science to serve as content. The Society relies on the Journal to disseminate important research findings that have been appropriated vetted.

The Journal has often published meeting summaries from the National SOT meeting and others as part of our Forum series. As Editor, I would prefer to see the findings from the meetings appear as primary research papers. The original data that describe the discoveries are the most influential source of information. I would like to see fewer, but more influential Forum articles. Similar to that poster that needs a few more experiments to be ready to submit for publication, many workshops or symposia just aren’t ready to be published. The abstract book provides a source of helpful summaries. Forum articles must go beyond summarizing presentations. While such articles may have their genesis in such meetings, they must do more than regurgitate the discussion. Forum articles should have a compelling need for publication. The topic must be timely, and the content must be informative or visionary. It may take multiple symposia before a topic is ready to be discussed in the pages of *Toxicological Sciences*. Thus, while we encourage such submissions we ask authors to reflect upon the state of the science to see if there is a sufficient level of interest and insight before considering submission of meeting summaries or reports.

I invite you to incorporate the exciting data that are presented in poster and presentation form in Phoenix into exciting manuscripts and submit them to the Journal sponsored by the Society of Toxicology. We are here to showcase your innovation, analysis, and scholarship and to provide the field with the best research in toxicology. Where will your data go from Phoenix, Arizona? The reader will note that the third destination noted by Steve Miller (“…Takoma, Philadelphia, Atlanta, L.A.”) happens to be where my office is located. As a long time SOT member and attendee of the national meetings, I hope that you follow his suggestion and send your best work to my desk in Atlanta.

REFERENCE