

The 2009 ARO MidWinter Meeting



Paul A. Fuchs, Ph.D.
2009-2010 ARO Past President

The 32nd annual Midwinter Meeting of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology took place February 14-19, 2009 at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland. Attendance totaled 1475, with 986 posters presented (compared to 1484 attendees and 1008 posters in 2008). This was the association's second visit to Baltimore, and we'll return for the 2011, 2013 and 2015 meetings. So, it's good news that our previous good experience was repeated this year, with positive comments from many members regarding hotel facilities, accommodation, and the considerate and attentive staff. One serious weakness, noted by many, concerned the audio service. Alex Springer from Talley Management is working with AV services to ensure that this problem doesn't arise in the future. And while on the topic, once again we owe our thanks for the professional and comprehensive organizational efforts of Alex and the other Talley staff: Lisa Astorga, Donna Colavita, Darla Dobson and Laura Newcomb. Before finishing with membership feedback, I encourage everyone to peruse the post-ARO survey for insights and recommendations provided by your fellow attendees. Some fixes should be do-able, such as the afore-mentioned audio problems, or providing more chairs in the poster hall. Other requests will be less tractable ('move the Baltimore Marriott to St. Pete Beach' is a personal favorite).

Among the favored highlights, many respondents mentioned the Presidential Lecture given by Charlie Liberman, the Award of Merit winner. Charlie's contributions to our understanding of cochlear innervation and function are essential and unsurpassed. His lecture not only reflected the substance of those contributions, but also looked ahead to as-yet unanswered questions. Charlie's long-time colleagues and co-workers, Drs. David Ryugo and Chris Brown, filled in details of 'the early years', as well as explaining the significance of Charlie's work. The Presidential Symposium, "Comparative Studies of the Ear: of (more than) Mice and Men" also was well-received by many and I would like again to thank those speakers for so clearly illustrating the excitement and wonder that can be generated by studying nature's own experiments in hearing and balance.

The very challenging task of organizing and scheduling presentations and poster sessions was carried out by the Program Committee under its new leader, Sharon Kujawa. It's impossible to eliminate every potential conflict, but these were minimized through their efforts. The Symposia and Workshops were, as always, an essential component of the intellectual and scientific vitality of the meeting and the organizers and speakers are to be thanked for their efforts. The 'Science and the Media' workshop moderated by Larry Lustig (with Joe Palka and Sandra Blakeslee) was particularly popular. The poster sessions

(excepting the lack of chairs) were generally well-received, with the benefits of a large hall and access over 24 hours a favorite benefit of holding the meeting in a hotel, rather than convention center.

During the coming year the Council will continue to work on ways of improving ARO function and activities. Membership input is essential, both from the survey, as well as individual messages you deliver to Council members. Efforts will continue to streamline the committee structure of the ARO, and a proposed bylaw change on the election of the Nominating Committee will be drafted for membership vote in the coming months. In 2010 we will meet for the first time on the west coast, in Anaheim, CA. The ARO holds an option for a multi-year contract with that hotel and will rely on your help in deciding if this will meet our needs going forward. You will recall that a majority of respondents favored alternating east and west coast venues for the coming years, and the Anaheim site provided the best west coast option for ease of access, facilities and cost. Rumor has it that the grounds are reminiscent of those around the Tradewinds in St. Pete's Beach, (but with fish tacos instead of grouper sandwiches at poolside). Chances are good that it will be warmer than Baltimore, so bring your shorts. Looking forward to seeing you there.



M. Charles Liberman, Ph.D. received the 2009 Award of Merit. Pictured are (L to R): M. Charles Liberman and Paul Fuchs. Photo by D. Lim



Dr. Paul Fuchs was presented a certificate of appreciation for his service as the 2008-2009 ARO President. Pictured are (L to R): Paul Fuchs, Steven Rauch. Photo by D. Lim

Save the Date!
ARO MidWinter Meeting: February 6-10, 2010
Important Note: The meeting will begin Saturday morning, February 6 and will end Wednesday, February 10.

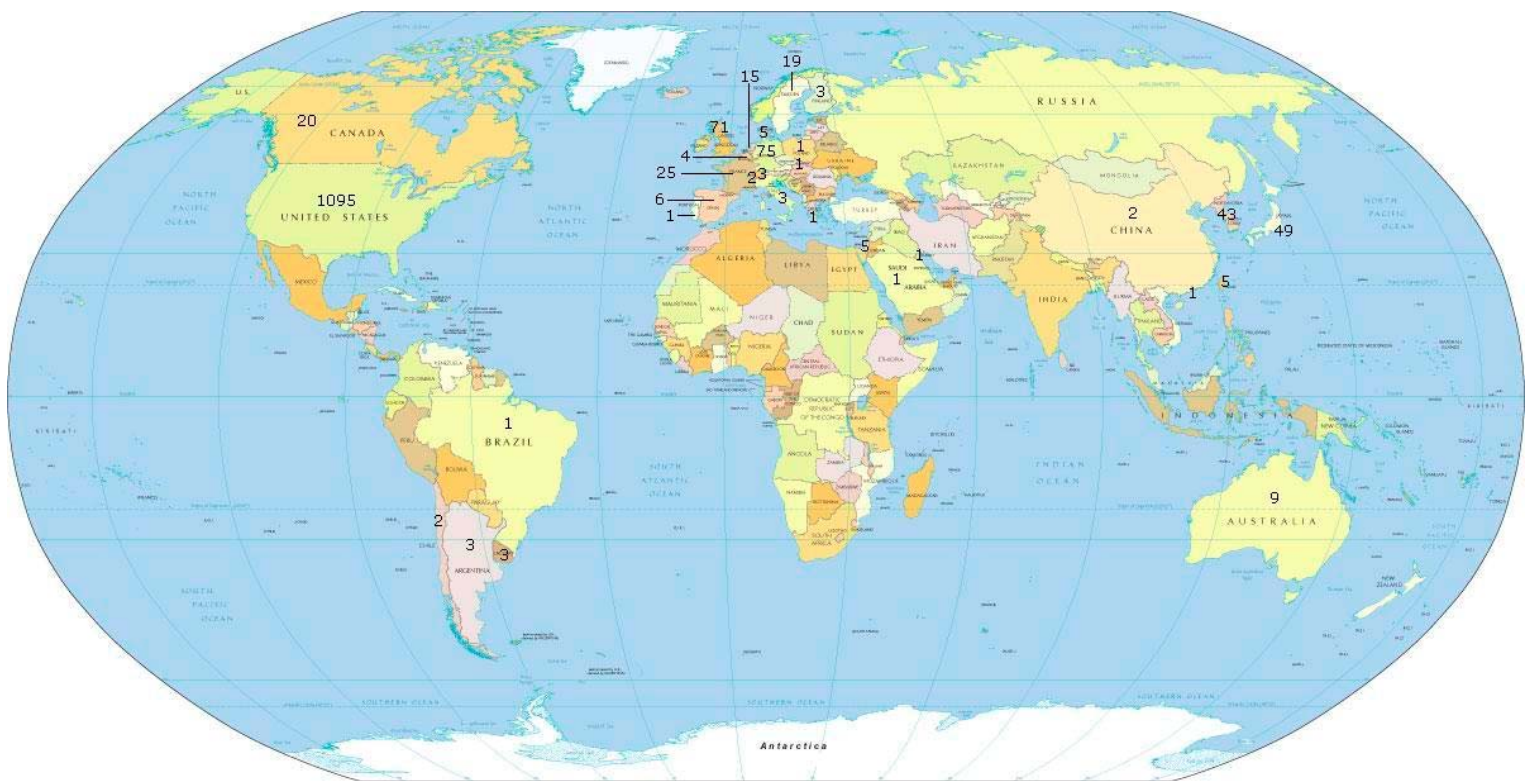
2009 MidWinter Meeting Hair Ball

Wednesday evening saw the first ARO-wide 'Hair Ball', a dance party that has gradually grown from its inception at the first Baltimore meeting. Having burst the seams of neighborhood bars in Denver and Phoenix, it seemed opportune to use the Marriott facilities this year. An 8-piece dance orchestra, 'Radiant', led by area musician (and educator) Dave Rhen, provided great sounds and the crowd responded enthusiastically. By evening's end the dance floor was packed with shimmying scientists of all ages and abilities. The unofficial dance committee is hoping for a return engagement in Anaheim, so watch for announcements - and bring your dancing shoes.

Photos by D. Lim

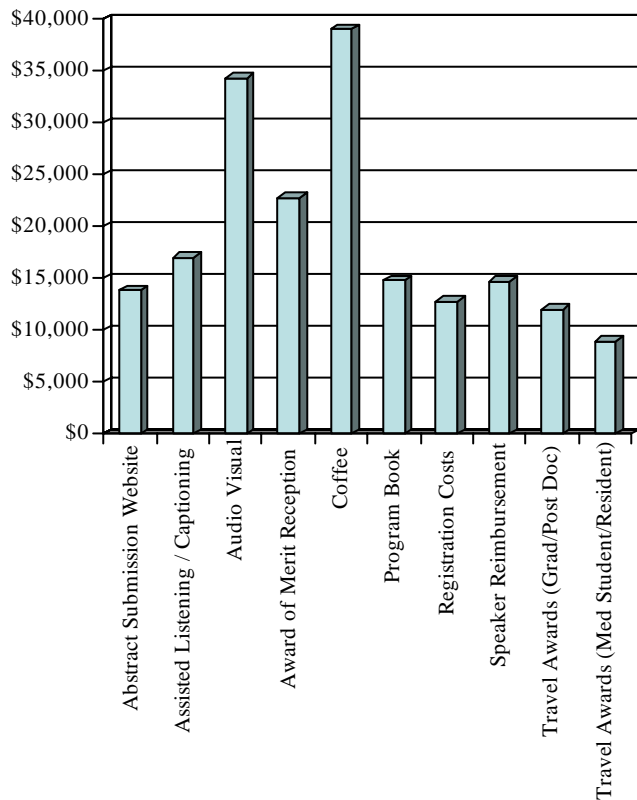


ARO 2009 MidWinter Meeting Attendees by Geographic Location



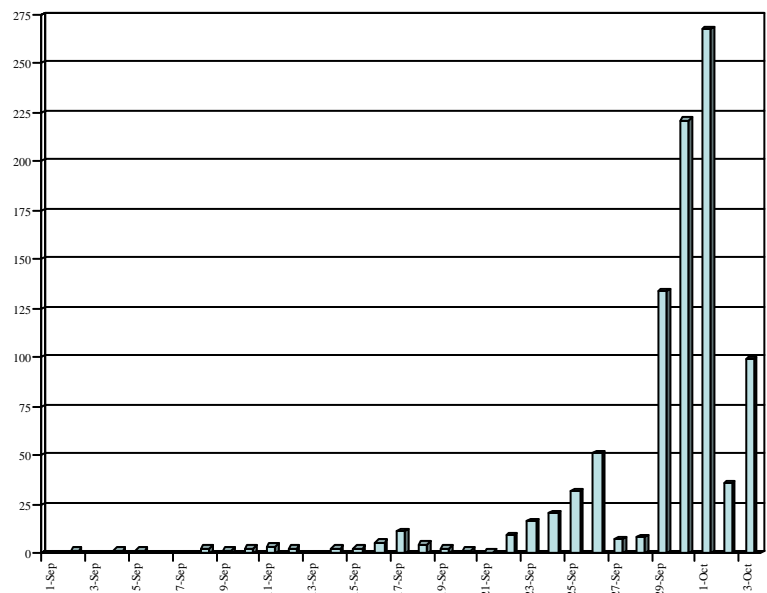
ARO MidWinter Meeting Expenses

The graph shows the top ten expenses incurred at the 2009 MidWinter Meeting.



ARO Abstract Submission

The graph shows abstract submission for the 2009 MidWinter Meeting. The greatest number of submissions (267) was on the last day and 63% of the total were submitted during the last three days.



Long Range Planning Committee: 2009 MidWinter Meeting Report and Questionnaire Summary



Dan H. Sanes, Ph.D.
Chair, Long Range Planning

Those of you with a steel-trap memory may recall a series of open-ended questions that we appended to the 2008 survey. In doing so, the Long Range Planning Committee, then under Robin Davis' sound guidance, was hoping to elicit ideas that could not be captured properly by the standard post-meeting multiple choice exam. The number and quality of responses were encouraging, and we used them to instruct our discussions this past February.

We first asked how ARO might better bridge the gap between clinical and basic sciences. A few practical alterations were suggested, such as advancing the ARO MidWinter Meeting by 24 hours to provide clinicians with an improved opportunity to attend (that is, permitting them to make use of the entire weekend when clinical duties abate). A second, more proactive suggestion, was to sponsor an innovative set of Lunchtime Seminars presented by clinicians for basic research scientists. Each lecture would provide a primer on a specific disorder, with the intention of providing basic research scientists with a better understanding of the relationship between their research and the associated clinical problems. These Seminars could also provide basic or clinician scientists with a scientific primer in a new research area. Another possibility that may receive further attention (and additional input from you) would permit ARO Abstract authors to provide a "clinical implications" sentence to appear with the abstract, and possibly flag the poster at the meeting.

The LRPC next considered approaches for public outreach. Among the possibilities here are a link library for the redesigned ARO website with information for those with related health concerns. This could include links to ARO member lab websites that provide an update on research and long-range goals. A suggestion was also made to ask ARO members to join a "Speakers Bureau" so that NIH or ARO can quickly refer questions to experts who are willing to address individuals, talk to the media, or give lectures. Finally, we discussed a recommendation to interface with patient support groups, clinics, or universities in the MidWinter Meeting host city to co-sponsor an Evening Lecture for the lay public on an area of immediate interest (e.g., presbycusis, tinnitus, hearing aids, vertigo). The third area of deliberation was mentorship of students, postdocs, & new faculty. One possibility that attracted some interest was holding a "Young Investigator Luncheon" with the Burt Evans Award winner. Graduate students and postdocs would have an opportunity to obtain pertinent information about the process of obtaining a position, writing grants, searching for a faculty position, and setting up a lab. Many of the ideas mentioned above, and originating with you, were presented at the final ARO Council Meeting and at least some will be implemented over the next few years.

The 2009 survey indicated tremendous satisfaction with the scientific content of our meeting. A strong majority found the overall meeting to be excellent to outstanding (78%). While the individual components of the meeting were also rated in these categories by a majority of those responding, the enthusiasm ranged from substantial (Contributed Posters, 70%) to modest (Podium Sessions, 55%). With one prominent exception, you also found the meeting location and organization to be good to outstanding (>80%). One portion of the meeting that attracted particularly high praise in the comments was the Science & the Media session with Joe Palka and Sandra Blakeslee. Unhappily, the audiovisual component of many podium sessions, particularly microphones and loudspeakers were dismal. The majority of comments to the "What would you MOST like to see done differently next year?" suggested that this was a particular affront at meeting devoted largely to the auditory system. You sent a strong message to the organizers and, at the same time, suggested implicitly that this sort of situation is probably acceptable to our friends at ARVO.

As in previous years, the issue of meeting location produced some of the most passionate opinions. However, those attitudes have become quite diverse. For example, while there remains strong support for holding the meeting in a location reminiscent of St. Pete Beach, there are also a significant number of respondents who favor the Baltimore venue because the single location for both housing and meeting events tends to promote social interaction (so, just like St. Pete Beach, but you don't track sand into the room).

Korean-American ORL Society Travel Awards

The Korean-American ORL Society has been supporting young Korean scientists, graduate students by offering travel awards for attendance at the ARO MidWinter Meeting. For the 2009 meeting, they awarded three travel awards to three young Korean clinician scientists.



Pictured above, from left to right: Steven K. Juhn (President), Jae-Jin Song, MD (Seoul National University), Chang-Hee Kim, MD (Seoul National University), Yong Kim, MD (Inha University), and Timothy Jung (Vice-President).

Birth of spARO: Student, Postdoc and Medical Resident Chapter of ARO



*Adrian KC Lee, ScD
Ex-officio, spARO steering committee*

“To foster career development of students, post-doctoral fellows and medical residents in otolaryngology by providing opportunities to participate in association governance, network with each other and meet senior scientists outside their geographic and technical area,” such is the objective of the newly formed student, postdoc, and medical resident chapter of ARO (spARO).

In the late fall of 2007, a small group of students from Boston drafted a proposal for the formation of a new chapter of ARO that would serve the associate membership - graduate students; postdoctoral researchers; and medical residents and fellows. After receiving unanimous approval from the council, the first spARO steering committee was named and representatives were nominated to nine committees within the ARO organization. The steering committee acts as a formal conduit between the spARO members and the ARO governance, while ARO committee representatives serve a role similar to their Full Member counterparts. At the spARO Town Hall meeting, held on Monday 5pm during the 2009 MidWinter Meeting, four associate members of ARO were elected as the new spARO Steering Committee.

Starting with the 2008 Midwinter Meeting, the spARO steering committee has assumed responsibility for hosting the student social. Over 200 people attended in Phoenix and feedback was very enthusiastic. With the help of Paul Nelson, PhD (Johns Hopkins University) we replicated this feat in Baltimore. The newly elected spARO steering committee looks forward to working with spARO volunteers in California to host yet another memorable spARO social in 2010.

I would like to express my gratitude to the founding members of the steering committee: Sam Irving, PhD, at MRC-IHR, Nottingham, UK; Harrison Lin, MD, at MEEI and especially Bradley Buran and Sasha Devore at Harvard-MIT for their help in drafting the original spARO proposal to the Council. I would also like to thank the guidance and support of our ARO Council adviser, Dr. Robin Davis (Rutgers). I look forward to working with the newly-elected steering committee members: Jennifer Bizley, DPhil, at Oxford, UK; Naomi Bramhall, AuD, at Harvard- MIT; Stephen David, PhD, at University of Maryland and Thomas Welch at SUNY Buffalo.



A good time was had by all. Over 200 spARO members enjoyed an unlimited supply of food on Sunday night at The Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore.



Congratulations to winners of the Exhibitor Scavenger Hunt. Prizes were awarded at the ARO Business Meeting and included Wii, Wii Fit, Digital Photo Frames, iPod Touch, and American Express Gift Cards.



The 2009 MidWinter Meeting poster hall.

ARO Council

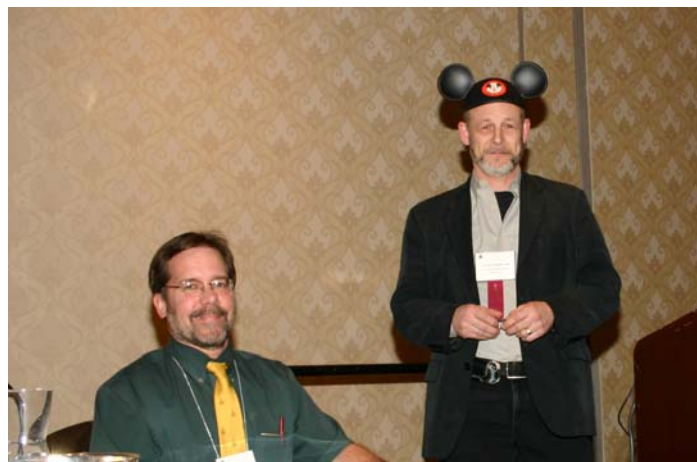
Photos by D. Lim



2009-2010 Council (L to R): David Lim, Laurel Carney, Robin Davis, Karen Avraham, Paul Fuchs, Peter Santi, Steven Rauch, Jay Rubinstein



2008-2009 Council (L to R): Steven Rauch, John Middlebrooks, Paul Fuchs, Peter Santi, David Lim, Ashley Wackym, Laurel Carney, Jay Rubinstein



ARO Council is looking forward to the 2010 MidWinter Meeting at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California!



ARO 2009 Council meeting work session.

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Future ARO MidWinter Meetings

February 6-10, 2010

Disneyland Hotel
Anaheim, California

February 19-24, 2011

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel
Baltimore, Maryland

February 4-8, 2012

Disneyland Hotel
Anaheim, California

February 16-21, 2013

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel
Baltimore, Maryland

February 1-5, 2014

Disneyland Hotel
Anaheim, California

February 21-26, 2015

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel
Baltimore, Maryland