



IBNS News

Volume 12, Issue 2

November, 2008

Melanie A. Paquette, Editor

CALL FOR SYMPOSIA FOR IBNS ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 9-14, 2009 IN MANZANILLO, MEXICO

The Program Committee is soliciting proposals for symposia. A typical symposium includes four speakers and is scheduled for two hours. Proposals should include a title, the name of the chairperson(s), a substantive description of the topic and proposed talks, the list of speakers, their affiliations, and tentative talk titles. Geographic diversity of speakers is encouraged. Please send your proposal to the Program Committee Chair, Dr. Donald Stein (dstei04@emory.edu) and copy the IBNS Central Office (ibns@ibnshomepage.org) by December 1, 2008.

For additional information and instructions, please visit our website at:
<http://www.ibnshomepage.org>

IBNS BOOTH & RECEPTION IN WASHINGTON, D.C. Dr. Michela Gallagher to be Honored

IBNS will exhibit at booth #3322 during SFN 2008. IBNS will also sponsor a reception on Sun., Nov. 16 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Renaissance Washington D.C. Hotel, Rooms 10-11. Dr. Michela Gallagher of the John Hopkins University has been selected to receive this year's Career Achievement Award in Behavioral Neuroscience at the IBNS reception. The reception is open to all SFN attendees interested in behavioral neuroscience.



The Wyndham Grand Bay, Isla Navidad Resort in Manzanillo, Mexico (above) will host the 2009 Annual Meeting of the IBNS. The most up-to-date Annual Meeting information is available on our web site. For more information on Manzanillo, see Page 2.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2009 IBNS ANNUAL MEETING

December 1, 2008 - Symposia Proposal Deadline
December 1, 2008 - Satellite Proposal Deadline
February 1, 2009 - Abstracts Due for Posters & Oral Presentations
February 1, 2009 - Student/Postdoc Travel Award Applications Due
February 1, 2009 - Discounted Registration Ends
March 1, 2009 - Notification of Student/Postdoc Travel Awards
April 1, 2009 - Late Abstract Deadline (posters only)
April 1, 2009 - Exhibitor Registration and Ad Submission Deadline
May 15, 2009 - Hotel Reservation Deadline
May 15, 2009 - Last Day for Refunds
June 2, 2009 - Online Registration Deadline
June 9-14, 2009 - Conference Dates (on-site registration available)

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MANZANILLO, MEXICO: SITE OF THE 2009 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE IBNS

By Sara Cruz-Morales, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee

Beautiful beaches, an international marina, and nautical recreation can be found in Manzanillo, a coastal strip of western Mexico that seduces visitors with golden sand and inviting, transparent waters.

Manzanillo is located 73 kilometres (45 miles) from Colima, the capital of the mountainous state, and 1290 kilometres (800 miles) from Mexico City. It is a beach paradise and also one of the country's most dynamic merchant ports. Thanks to its modern tourist infrastructure, visitors are able to fully enjoy its natural charms.

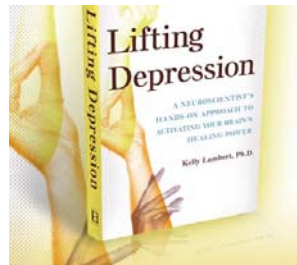
The history of Manzanillo is full of maritime adventures that began long before the arrival of the Spaniards. Initially, this area was used as

a seaport by Mesoamerican sailors. In 1522, Hernan Cortes came ashore. Five years later, Alvaro Saavedra would land, giving the bay with the name of "Bay of Santiago de la Buena Esperanza". In 1825, the bay was finally named "Manzanillo", in honour of the homonymous flower (Chamomile or Manzanilla in Spanish), which spreads its delicate fragrance throughout the entire area. Manzanillo became a city in 1873 and an official seaport in 1908, thanks to its connection to the city of Guadalajara.

The tourist development of this beach paradise is concentrated on its two bays, Santiago and Manzanillo, where you can find world-class hotels and resorts, such the Wyndham Grand Bay, Isla Navidad Resort, which will host the

2009 Annual Meeting of the IBNS. But the main attractions in Manzanillo are still its beaches: beautiful and warm, there is a beach for all tastes. The ocean near Manzanillo is ideal for sport fishing, and Manzanillo is considered "The World's Capital of the Sailfish", one of the most sought-after sportfish.

Tourists to Manzanillo should visit the state capital Colima, renowned for its unique ceramics, called izcuintli (in the shape of a dog), and for its diverse cultural heritage. Visitors will also appreciate the traditional towns of Comala and Suchitlán and the bohemian air of Barra de Navidad, an artist community. For more information, visit: <http://www.enjoymexico.net/manzanillo-mexico.php>.

MEMBER NEWS

Kelly Lambert, IBNS President-Elect, recently published a book entitled, "Lifting Depression: A Neuroscientist's Hands-On Approach to Activating Your Brain's Healing Power". For more information, visit:

<http://kellylambert.com/index.php>

In recognition of the concepts he has introduced into the peptide field, **Abba J. Kastin** was recently awarded an honorary doctorate from Uppsala University (Sweden) and became an honorary professor of the Peking University Health Science Center, as well as an honorary member of Indian and Brazilian scientific societies.

Editor of the 213-chapter Handbook of Biologically

Active Peptides, the journal *Peptides*, and co-editor of the 2008 Henry Stewart Talk Series on the Blood-Brain Barrier, Dr. Kastin presented an inaugural lecture at the first meeting of the IBNS.

In July, **Giovanni Biggio** was elected President of the Italian Society of Neuropsychopharmacology (2008-2011).

IBNS Members: Email your news to paquette@ohsu.edu to be included in the next newsletter.

ALTERNATIVE CAREERS FOR GRADUATE DEGREES: SCIENCE WRITING & MEDICAL WRITING

By Melanie A. Paquette

The IBNS Newsletter has chosen to spotlight “non-traditional” career options for individuals with graduate degrees. (See the Spring 2007 and Spring 2008 issues for other articles in this series.)

If you enjoy writing about science and research and want a career with flexible hours and salary, consider science or medical writing like Drs. Dana Desonie and Robert Romanelli.

Name: Dana Desonie

Job Title: Science Writer, Editor, and Lesson-Planner, self-employed, Phoenix, AZ

Birthplace: San Francisco, CA

Training:

- B.A. in Geology, 1981, California State University, Fresno
- M.S. in Geology, 1985, University of Oregon, Eugene
- Ph.D. in Oceanography, 1990, Oregon State University, Corvallis
- Postdoctoral fellow, 1990-1992, Oregon State University, Corvallis
- Postdoctoral fellow, 1992-1994, The Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University



Job Description: I am a science writer and editor, specializing in the earth, ocean and environmental sciences, astronomy and chemistry. My book set, *Our Fragile Planet*, for grades 6-12 for Chelsea House was released in late 2007 and early 2008. Over the years, I have written textbook chapters, educational lessons, and many pieces for web sites, radio, magazines, CD-ROMs, textbooks, ancillary educational materials, and encyclopedia. I frequently edit proposals for scientists and engineers at Arizona State University.



Salary: \$8,000-\$55,000

My income varies depending on whether I have a part-time real job, whether I am working on books (and may be in a year when I'm receiving an advance or final payment), whether I score more good-paying work, and whether I am interested in making more money or not.

Hours/week: 30

Pros

- Learning about lots of different scientific topics
- Freedom to work or not work as I choose
- Staying in science without doing the nitty-gritty scientific work requiring more depth and less breadth

Cons

- Isolation of working at home alone
- Never being able to get away from work
- Unpredictable income
- Having to look for freelance jobs

Career Trajectory

Academic jobs were extremely scarce in the early-mid 1990s and I realized that it was unlikely that my husband and I would both get jobs. Also, I found that I was learning more and more about less and less and I really wasn't interested in the topic where I'd found myself in my second postdoctoral fellowship. So I decided to find a new career, and I had a friend who told me that I wrote good letters. I happened to be at Columbia University at the time and so during my final year of post-doc, I took a news writing class in the fall and I received special permission to take a science writing class in the Journalism School in the spring. The professor liked me and recommended me for a few freelance writing jobs.

Eventually we moved to Phoenix, I ran out of NY contacts and I had a couple of babies. I wound up doing a lot of textbook work, not actually writing textbooks, but the ancillary materials like instructor's manuals and study guides. I also worked part-time

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as an editor with the Center for Evolutionary and Functional Genomics, a field I knew nothing about and never really understood. When the opportunity to write the book set came up, I jumped on it, even though financially it wound up being about one year's worth of money for three years worth of work. Since I've completed the books, I've rewritten an instructor's manual I did before, written some chapters of a middle school earth science text, and edited quite a few proposals for scientists and engineers at Arizona State University. The proposal work is great since it pays well, the topics are always interesting, I get to work with smart people, and I'm treated like a real professional. Although I wouldn't need a Ph.D. to do anything that I do, I think it gives me the confidence to look professors in the eye when I tell them they need to make some major changes in their work.

Can you balance your job with family?

Yes, that's the real value to freelancing. Before my first baby, I was teaching a course each semester at Arizona State University and freelancing on the side. When the kids were young, I gave up the teaching partly because I found I could only do one thing and I chose writing/editing. Now that the kids are older, I take time off during school breaks for family vacations. I can also take time off if there's a party at school or to help out with the science fair. This doesn't

help my finances, but every time I think about getting a real job, I think that giving up the flexibility would be very hard on us all. I have worked half-time, and that's nice, but then it's hard to keep up with the freelance work.



Advice

I always felt that I couldn't get off the track, that somehow it would be failure to have a B.A. or an M.S. but not a Ph.D. It wasn't until I was a post-doc that I realized that getting off track is okay! I don't consider myself a failure, but rather a different sort of success. There are many people from my scientific past - probably mostly the ones who put a lot of effort into being sure I had top-notch scientific training - who think that I have failed because I haven't become an academic geological oceanographer. But it's necessary in certain job markets, or when you have other goals like staying with a spouse and having a family, to sometimes find alternatives. When doing that it's important to find the aspects of what you do that you enjoy and putting those things together in a way that makes a great job for you. For me, what I enjoy was learning about a wide variety of things rather than one thing in ever-increasing detail and also the pleasure of explaining a complicated concept simply or changing someone else's

paragraph so that it now made sense. Making money at doing what you love is good too.

Lots of people make lots of money being a science writer and editor, most of them in the medical field. Other people seem to be able to make money writing sexy articles for magazines like "Discover." My success has been in straddling the line between academics and writing. Writing for textbooks, writing reference books, editing for scientists, which uses my scientific background, writing abilities and basic smarts for good purpose. But I don't think I'm going to get rich doing it!

Name: Rob Romanelli

Job Title: Medical Writer,
Helix Medical
Communications, San
Francisco, CA

Birthplace: Brooklyn, NY

Training:

- B.S. in Biology, 2000, St. John's University
- Ph.D. in Cell and Molecular Biology, 2006, Pennsylvania State University, College of Medicine
- Postdoctoral fellowship in Behavioral Neuroscience, 2006-2008, Oregon Health & Science University



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Job Description:

In partnership with pharmaceutical companies, I develop clinical manuscripts (drug trials, post-hoc analyses, and review/opinion articles), abstracts, posters, and slide decks. Additionally, I provide strategic services by generating literature analysis reports.



Salary: \$75,000-\$95,000

Hours/week: 40

Pros

- Learning about various therapeutic areas, as well as the pharmaceutical industry as a whole.
- Being involved in science without having to do the bench work.
- Ability to work from home.

Cons

- Working under tight deadlines.

Career Trajectory

I entered a Ph.D. program in cell and molecular biology with an interest in research and the intent to pursue an academic career. Like many unseasoned graduate students, however, I was naïve to what was required to obtain an academic position (i.e. a tenure-track professorship). I knew that publications were key, but not how many. I also knew research grants were important, but not how difficult it was to obtain

funding. By the end of graduate school, I found myself frustrated with bench work and at a cross-roads; I could leave academic science or go on to a postdoctoral fellowship. I choose the latter, not because I was still interested in an academic career but because I was unsure what was in store for me if I left academia. My years as a postdoc gave me time to figure out what it was that I wanted to do and provided further training that would certainly benefit me in whatever career I chose. And then it finally hit me! Although I didn't enjoy the day-to-day lab work, I did look forward to writing the results. I very much enjoyed writing research manuscripts, review articles, abstracts, and yes, even grant applications. It was apparent that medical writing was an appropriate career path.

Currently, I work for a private medical communications agency in the San Francisco Bay Area, whose clients are pharmaceutical companies. In my role as a medical writer, I develop manuscripts (clinical trials, post-hoc analyses, and review/opinion articles), abstracts, posters, and slide decks, and I provide strategic services by generating literature analysis reports for our clients. The transition from lab research to a private agency, where I work at a computer most of the day, was a welcomed challenge. Rather than working on a single molecule or signal transduction pathway, I have broadened my scientific understanding into several clinical areas including ophthalmology, oncology, and

neurology. Moreover, I have broadened my general understanding of drug design and development from both a biological and business perspective.

So what is required to become a medical writer?

Most medical communication agencies require their writers to have a doctorate (M.D., Ph.D. or Pharm.D.), since the job requires an in-depth understanding of biology, disease-states, and the mechanism of action of various therapeutic agents. Although postdoctoral research experience is not required, the more experience you have, the better. Experience in writing scientific manuscripts (not necessarily clinical) and developing poster and PowerPoint presentations is highly recommended.



Can you balance your job with family?

Yes. Medical writing is a flexible career in which, depending on the agency, you have the option to work from home a few days a week. Freelancing is also an option for those who prefer working from home full-time.

Advice

The best advice I can give to students (undergraduate/graduate) and postdoctoral fellows is to talk to people

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who have left academia and find out where they are employed and how they got there (HINT: alumni are a valuable resource). Given that jobs in academia are few and far between, alumni with non-traditional career paths shouldn't be too difficult to track down. As a graduate student, I was fortunate enough to be exposed to alternative careers through career day

events at the university, where alumni came to discuss their career paths (traditional and non-traditional). This is where I first learned about medical writing, which was one of many careers that were represented. You may want to suggest such an event at your university.

Another kernel of advice that I can give is to get on the internet. Search for jobs in science on career websites (including the National

Institutes of Health human resource webpage). Here, you will discover what jobs are available, the background required (i.e. degree, experience, etc.) and pay scale. Other web-based resources include professional organizations, such as the American Medical Writer's Association (AMWA), where you can learn more about individual careers. Contact someone and ask specific questions about what they do.

JOB OPENINGS

University of Toronto, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Two grad student and 1-2 postdocs to investigate behavioral genetics in zebrafish with Dr. Robert Gerlai.

Johns Hopkins Medical Inst., Baltimore, MD, USA. One 3-year, NIDA-funded postdoc with Drs. Irving Reti & Jay Baraban.

New York State Institute for Basic Res. in Developmental Abilities, Staten Island, NY, USA. One postdoc to investigate animal models of autism, Down syndrome, and Alzheimer disease with Dr. Khalid Iqbal.

University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX, USA. 1-2 postdocs investigating stress, PTSD, and antidepressants with Dr. David Morilak.

M.I.N.D. Institute at University of California Davis, Sacramento, CA, USA. One postdoc to investigate autism with Drs. Sally Rogers & David Amaral beginning Aug., 2009.

Western Washington Univ., Bellingham, WA USA. One tenure-track position in Behavioral Neuroscience. Application review begins Nov. 30, 2008 beginning Sept., 2009.

Trinity University, San Antonio, TX, USA. A Williams Endowed Professorship in Neurophysics or Biophysics is currently open. Application review begins Dec. 1, 2008.

Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University, Providence, RI, USA. A tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor position is open in the Dept. of Neuroscience.

2008-2009 IBNS ORGANIZATION

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FUNDING FOCUS: PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

In this issue, we spotlight several private foundations that support neuroscience research. As funding becomes more scarce, alternative funding mechanisms such as those offered by private foundations become increasingly important. Text is reprinted from online sources with permission.

General Neuroscience

The **Dana Foundation** is a private, philanthropic organization with interests in brain research, immunology, and arts education. Each grant area has specific requirements. For full details and information, please visit the grants section on the Dana Web site:

<http://dana.org/grants/>

Autism

One of our goals at **Autism Speaks** is to identify and support promising research with the hope that results from these efforts will produce significant findings that will be reported in peer-reviewed journals. We also hope that grants we fund will lead to additional research support from government or other funding agencies. Since 1997, the organizations combined have committed more than \$89 million to fund more than 737 research projects and fellowships. The investment in these research grants alone has been leveraged into nearly \$153 million in NIH and other funding for the continuation of these scientific studies.

Each year Autism Speaks holds a variety of investigator-initiated grant calls. We are pleased to be able to support many different types of

projects, each critical for advancing all phases of autism research, from basic to clinical to treatment. These grants are crucial for allowing investigators to gain enough data to be able to attract even larger, multi-year commitments from the NIH and other traditional medical research funding organizations. Our grants include pilot grants, basic and clinical grants, augmentation and bridge grants, treatment grants, and innovative technology grants.

Fellowships provide the resources to support and encourage development of young scientists who benefit from the mentorship of prominent researchers. We believe investment in autism research training will grow exponentially as fellows later assume teaching roles and join departments around the country and the world, many of which currently have no representation in autism research.

Please note that in addition to our investigator-initiated grants and fellowships, we also support research through funding of proactive initiatives, including collaborative projects, resources and meetings. See our website for more information:

www.autismspeaks.org.

Information provided courtesy of Autism Speaks.

Epilepsy

The **Epilepsy Foundation** supports a series of grants to advance the understanding of epilepsy that will lead to better treatment, more effective prevention, and ultimately to a cure. Our grants fund a wide

range of researchers including students, junior level and senior level investigators. For researchers intending to apply for a grant, please download the information and instructions for each program from our website:

www.epilepsyfoundation.org.

Fall Programs: Proposals due August 29, 2009 (unless otherwise noted)

- Research Grants Program
- Predoctoral & Postdoctoral Research Fellowships
- Partnership for Pediatric Epilepsy Research
- New Therapy Grants Program

Spring Programs: Proposals due March 2, 2009.

- Behavioral Sciences Student and Post-Doctoral Fellowships
- Health Sciences Student Fellowship
- Targeted Research Initiatives: Mood Disorders, Seniors, and Health Outcomes
- New Therapy Grants Program

Parkinson's Disease

Founded in 1957 and headquartered in Miami, the **National Parkinson Foundation** is the oldest Parkinson's organization, with the most extensive grassroots network of centers, chapters and support groups in the U.S., Canada, and internationally. Since 1984, NPF has invested over \$130 million in disease-related programs and is committed to increasing the quality of care for Parkinson's patients through research, education, care support and outreach services. For more information, please visit www.parkinson.org.

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The **Michael J. Fox Foundation** (MJFF) expects to fund \$25 to \$30 million in Parkinson's disease research in calendar year 2008. Our strong research emphasis is on translational and clinical research, but we offer funding programs targeting projects at all stages of the continuum from basic to clinical science.

On Nov. 3, the Foundation announced the availability of \$11 million in 2009 funding for academic and industry researchers through the Foundation's Pipeline Programs, five separate initiatives (including the annually recurring Edmond J. Safra Core Programs for PD Research) that stoke research at every stage of the PD drug development pipeline. The *Rapid Response Innovation Awards* provide fast funding with no deadline for novel, potentially

high-impact discovery; *Target Validation* and *Novel Approaches to Drug Discovery for Parkinson's Disease* support applied studies that can push identified therapeutic targets forward to the next stage of development; the *Clinical Intervention Awards* drive proof-of-principle/first-in-human clinical trials; and the *Therapeutics Development Initiative* offers industry-exclusive funding to catalyze and expand pre-clinical PD research at biotech and pharmaceutical companies. For more information, visit: www.michaeljfox.org/research_fundingOpportunities.cfm.

The Foundation also launches three to five **Critical Challenges** each year, which may recur or be one-offs. These programs provide funding for top MJFF research priorities such as biomarker development, validation of disease subtypes, directive focus on top therapeutic targets

such as LRRK2 and alpha-synuclein, funding for research into dyskinesia and untreated symptoms, and programs dedicated to the development of critical research tools such as improved pre-clinical models of PD.

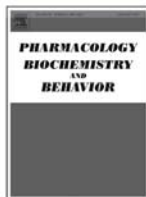
Attention SFN Attendees: MJFF will host a **Funding Philosophy and Grant Writing Workshop at SFN 2008** in Washington, D.C., on Sunday, Nov. 16, from 7:00-8:15 pm in the Convention Center room 159A. Our 2007 SFN presentation is available on our Web site (and may be accessed via the link in electronic IBNS newsletter). To be alerted whenever new funding opportunities are announced, sign up at: www.michaeljfox.org/research_researcherEmailSignup.cfm.

The IBNS would like to express our gratitude to the following organizations that have continually supported our society and its educational endeavors. This financial support has enabled many students to attend the annual conferences and also allowed for recruitment of excellent scientific speakers.

National Institute of Mental Health Grant Number: 2R13MH065244-06
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