

Valedictory message from the retiring INF President

It was an honour to be elected President of the International Neuroendocrine Federation in 2002, and it has been a great pleasure to work over the past four years with the Council, and particularly with the enthusiastic and skilled support of the INF Executive Officers to develop the Federation in pursuit of its objectives.

I am especially grateful to Tony Plant, who has been for the past four years not only the INF Secretary, but also the Chair of the Local Organising Committee of the 6th ICN, culminating in the excellent meeting in Pittsburgh in June this year. I know from many unsolicited comments from colleagues around the world that the Pittsburgh meeting was a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience for all. I would like to register here on behalf of the INF our gratitude to Tony and his team for setting such a high standard for future meetings to match. I also acknowledge the enthusiastic support and endorsement of the 6th ICN given by the American Neuroendocrine Society, the official host of the Congress.

During a period of explosion of discoveries in neuroendocrinology, especially in the areas of regulation of metabolism, reproduction and stress, it was a real privilege to work with Iain Clarke, as both Chair of the 6th ICN International Scientific Programme Organising Committee and INF Vice-President, in developing the programme. I know that Iain worked hard with his Committee, chosen to represent the neuroendocrine societies worldwide, to deliver successfully a programme that ensured new areas and younger colleagues were prominently featured, as well as the latest developments in established areas and from senior researchers.

Greti Aguilera has been INF Treasurer for most of the past four years, taking over from Tony Plant, and we are all indebted to her careful management of the INF treasury, with the difficult task of ensuring the inflow of dues from INF members. I warmly thank Greti for her commitment to this essential job.

As well as delivering the scientifically (and financially) most successful 6th International Congress of Neuroendocrinology in Pittsburgh, we have continued to expand the compass of the INF by enrolling new national societies (most recently the Romanian Psychoneuroendocrinology Society and the Pakistan Neuroendocrine Group), encouraging the establishment of others, and in engaging other cognate 'communicating' societies in constructive dialogue. I think that the decision by the Society of Behavioral Neuroendocrinology (an INF member society) to hold its annual meeting in Pittsburgh alongside the 6th ICN was a great success, and hope that this model may be considered for future congresses. We have also encouraged and supported neuroendocrinology conferences and schools in or for less-advantaged economic regions (e.g. meetings in Chile, Morocco, and a school originated by the Polish Society for Neuroendocrinology)- provided the support is targeted to trainees as it is for the ICN.

The INF website was designed by John Bicknell (Chair of the INF Publications Committee) to serve as a gateway to information about neuroendocrine societies, neuroendocrine meetings, jobs, special rates for personal subscriptions for neuroendocrinology journals and to educational and public understanding information packs. I am sure that the website and its reciprocal links to more information sources

on the internet will develop further as an essential search tool for neuroendocrinologists, and the wider community.

I am pleased to thank the editors and publishers of the journals in neuroendocrinology for their support and involvement in the 6th ICN, not only through sponsorship, but also by agreeing to publish selections of papers from the Congress. In due course a catalogue of these papers will appear on the INF website.

The INF began six years ago, as a result of the imagination of Dionysia Theodosia, then President of the International Society of Neuroendocrinology, who proposed the transformation of the ISN into a federation, to better represent the enlarging international community of neuroendocrinologists. Dionysia steered this change and continued as President of the INF. I was privileged to be INF Secretary for the first two years as the INF became established, learning from the enjoyable and interesting experience of working with Dionysia to make the INF a reality. So, my warm thanks go to Dionysia for that opportunity to learn the job.

From January 1st 2007 Tony Plant will take on the INF Presidency, and I wish him well, knowing that Tony has interesting ideas for taking the INF forward. At the same time William Rostène will become the INF Secretary, Mitsuhiro Kawata will become Treasurer- both having served for the last two years as Deputies in these roles, and Gareth Leng will start work as Chair of the 7th ICN Scientific Programme Organising Committee. These colleagues and friends, from the USA, France, Japan and the UK respectively, duly elected by the INF Council, will form the new INF Executive. They will work with Hubert Vaudry, Chair of the Local Organising Committee of the 7th ICN, to deliver what I am sure will be a superb Congress in Rouen, France, in 2010.

I hope that I have left the INF in good shape, with a sound mode of working. I know it is in good hands. I am certain that the INF has an important role, not only in encouraging and facilitating international scientific communication, but also to improve wider aspects of international understanding in the face of present threats.

John A Russell