



SPRING NEWSLETTER

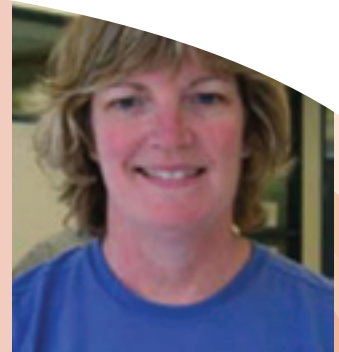
MARCH, 2010

Editorial

This is an occasion of 'welcome', firstly to our new President, **Bassam Nassar**, secondly to our new President elect, **Michelle Bendeck**, and lastly for our first on-line (and therefore much expanded) Newsletter. Bassam Nassar was Chair of Education and Editor of the Newsletter from 2002 – 2006. He is well acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the society. Michelle Bendeck, our future President, has previously held a position on Council, has co-organized the NAVBO Biomatrix Workshops at Whistler for the past few years and is keen to continue to organize these meetings and explore other ventures. The Newsletter team of the past three years, consisting of **Mary Richardson**, **Nabeel Ghayur** and me, will still be responsible for its production on-line. I have now succeeded Mary as Editor, Mary has moved to be the Assistant Editor and Nabeel will continue as the 'roving reporter'.

The Edmonton meeting last October was generally regarded as a huge success, not only in respect of attendance of members at the trainees' workshop, the annual dinner and the scientific sessions, but also the high standard of oral and poster presentations. Our ability to offer CME credits to physicians attending our Symposia has attracted a new pool of non-members to our sessions which, in time, will grow and hopefully increase our prominence and future membership.

This year is also the 25th anniversary of the society which started as a gathering of a few dozen individuals in 1983. The 'Canadian Atherosclerosis Society' was awarded letters patent in 1985. We changed our name to the 'Canadian Society of Atherosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology' in 1997 to enlarge the scope of our interests and thereby attract more members within Canadian research. Today, our membership stands at ~320 and is still growing



strongly. This year's annual meeting will be held during the Canadian Cardiovascular Congress in Montreal (October 23–28), and the organizers are promising a special gala banquet and Symposium to celebrate our 25-year milestone. These events together with a 4th Trainees' Workshop were approved by the Executive and Council in January, 2010. Plan to attend this meeting, it will be memorable I'm sure!

This edition of the Newsletter contains an account from **Dan Sparks** and **HeYu Ni** of their visit to China in July–August, 2009, on behalf of the society to present at a summer meeting of the Chinese Atherosclerosis Society. Our society needs to encourage links and eventually long-term interactions with other societies, and Dan and HeYu have been good ambassadors for CSATVB in China. Thanks, guys, and may our collaboration with CAS China, NAVBO and other societies continue. Also, **Robin MacLaren**, a member of the Trainee's Advisory Committee, has contributed an intriguing fund-raising idea for our consideration (see Letters). With pharmaceutical companies tending to withdraw their financial support for scientific societies like ours, alternative ideas for future fund raising will be essential to keep our society going for another 25 years. Please read Robin's innovative idea and send in your views.

Éditorial

C'est l'occasion de souhaiter la bienvenue premièrement à notre nouveau président, Bassam Nassar, deuxièmement à notre nouvelle présidente désignée, Michelle Bendeck et finalement de souligner notre premier journal en ligne (et dorénavant élargi). Bassam a été le président du comité de l'éducation et l'éditeur du « Newsletter » de 2002 à 2006. Il bien familier avec les forces et les faiblesses de la société. Michelle Bendeck, notre future présidente, a auparavant occupé un poste à titre de conseiller au sein du conseil d'administration, a coordonné l'atelier « NAVBO Biomatrix » de Whistler depuis quelques années et désire continuer son implication face à cet événement et réaliser d'autres projets. L'équipe du « Newsletter » de ces trois dernières années était constituée de Mary Richardson, Nabeel Ghayur et moi-même. Nous resterons responsables de sa production en ligne. J'ai maintenant succédé à Mary comme éditeur, Mary devient assistante éditrice et Nabeel restera notre reporter de terrain.

Notre réunion à Vancouver, en octobre dernier, peut être qualifiée de grand succès. Ce succès ne dépend pas seulement de la participation au « Trainees'Workshop », au dîner annuel et aux sessions scientifiques mais aussi à l'excellente qualité des présentations orales et par affiches. Notre capacité à offrir les crédits EMC aux médecins participants à nos symposiums a polarisé de nouveaux non-membres vers nos sessions ce qui à long terme ne manquera pas de favoriser, je l'espère, l'expansion de la société et l'augmentation du nombre de ses membres.

Cette année est également le 25^e anniversaire de la société laquelle a débuté grâce à l'initiative de quelques douzaines de personnes en 1983. La société canadienne d'athérosclérose fût officiellement reconnue en 1985. Nous avons changé notre nom pour la société canadienne d'athérosclérose, de thrombose et de biologie vasculaire en 1997 afin d'élargir nos champs d'intérêts scientifiques et d'attirer plus de membres à partir de la communauté des chercheurs canadiens. Aujourd'hui, nous comptons dans nos rangs ~320 membres et notre croissance se poursuit. Cette année, notre réunion annuelle se tiendra à l'occasion du « Canadian Cardiovascular Congress » à Montréal (23-28 octobre) et les organisateurs vous promettent un banquet gala spécial pour célébrer notre 25^e anniversaire. Ces événements ainsi que le 4^e « Trainees'Workshop » ont été approuvés par l'exécutif et le conseil en Janvier 2010. N'oubliez pas d'inscrire cette réunion à votre agenda. Ce sera un moment mémorable, j'en suis certain!

Cette édition du « Newsletter » contient un compte rendu de Dan Sparks et HeYu Ni suite à leur visite en Chine, en Juillet - août 2009, afin de représenter

la société à la réunion de la société d'athérosclérose chinoise se tenant en été. Notre société doit favoriser les liens et à long terme des interactions avec d'autres sociétés. Dan et HeYu furent de bons ambassadeurs pour la CSATVB en Chine. Merci, les gars, et que notre collaboration avec la CAS chinoise, NAVBO et autres sociétés puissent continuer. Aussi, Robin MacLaren, un membre du comité consultatif des étudiants, porte à notre attention une nouvelle et intrigante façon d'aller chercher des commandites (voir lettres). Avec la tendance de certaines compagnies pharmaceutiques de retirer leur soutien financier aux sociétés scientifiques comme la nôtre, des idées alternatives pour réaliser des levées de fonds seront essentielles à la survie de notre société pour les 25 prochaines années.

Mark Hatton (*Editor*)

Traduction : Louise Bourassa

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President's Report

This year will mark the 25th Anniversary of the Society and we look forward to celebrating it in Montreal with a very high calibre program. Thanks to the efforts of Drs. **Scott Heximer, Jim Russell, Garry Shen, Pierre Douville, Geoff Werstuck** and **Avrum Gotlieb**, we will hold a 25th Anniversary Symposium in place of the President's Symposium this year.

However, we on the Executive and Council are concerned about the significant decrease in our funding status in comparison to previous years. Our colleagues in the pharmaceutical industry, due to the global economic downturn, have had to limit or reconsider the direction and extent of their donations to the scientific community and the CSATVB has been no exception. As you know, this funding has allowed the CSATVB in the past five years to develop its educational activities and profile significantly. The most important and valuable opportunities for us over recent years have provided extensive support to our students and young trainees to attend the CSATVB-CCC meeting and present their research work, encouraged students to interact with each other and with prominent members of the cardiovascular research community, and initiated the Trainees' Workshop which is directed purely towards the interests of the students. Yet despite some gloomy views, our effort to raise funds will not wane and will continue, and we remain optimistic that we will receive some support from our pharmaceutical industry colleagues this year. However, as we work to raise these funds, we will ask that these funds be directed at the particular Society teaching activities that are most important to us, namely student and trainee attendance for presentation of their work and to our symposia. Additionally, to do so and to allow the Society to sustain this level of its educational initiatives, the Executive and

Council have agreed to limit the level of funding to one thousand dollars for each student and to restrict the cost of our symposia and workshop.

Another very significant initiative this year has been the updating and finalization of the Society's Constitution and bylaws, an enormous task undertaken so generously by Dr. **Mary Richardson**, this in addition to her effort to collect and maintain the Society's records and files as far back as its inception. For both efforts, we thank her enormously.

In addition, the Society has agreed to contribute and will support a symposium at NAVBO's IVBM meeting in 2010 to be chaired by our President Elect, Dr. **Michelle Bendeck**. We will also continue through the efforts of Dr. **Garry Shen** to maintain and strengthen our affiliations with the Chinese Atherosclerosis Society. Importantly, and while the CSATVB did not succeed in its bid to bring the IAS 2015 meeting to Toronto, this effort will now be restarted in 2012 to work toward having this meeting in Toronto in 2018.

Finally, we will continue to provide further updates and information on our Website and Newsletter to our members and generally, especially updates on our Montreal meeting, all thanks to the efforts of Drs. **Pierre Julien, Mark Hatton, Nabeel Ghayur** and **Mary Richardson**. Regarding the Montreal meeting, while the Society's scientific meeting will be at the Palais des Congrès; the workshop, the Executive meeting and the 25th Anniversary dinner will all be held at the Hotel Place D'Armes. For the latter, I thank Mme. **Louise Bourassa** and Dr. **Pierre Julien** for making this possible and for their diligent efforts throughout the year to attend to all the financial and administrative matters that maintain this Society.

Bassam A. Nassar, PhD, MB BCH, FRCPC, FCACB
President, CSATVB

The Trainee's Workshop and Society Annual Dinner, Edmonton, October 25, 2009

Similar to the previous two years, the CSATVB Trainee Advisory Committee in 2009 organized a much appreciated 3rd Trainees' Workshop. The Workshop was part of the CSATVB Annual Scientific Meeting in Edmonton and took place in the Union Bank Inn. The overall theme was "Careers for Young Scientists", a similar topic to that of the 1st Workshop in 2007 but this year the

format was different and better appreciated by the trainees. Previously, the structure of the workshop was simple and included talks from four eminent scientists/professionals followed by a question and answer period. This year, the Workshop consisted of talks from only three speakers and afterwards the audience of trainees was divided into three groups (seated around big round tables) and each speaker

met with each group in a rotation. This gave trainees more access to question the speakers and for the speakers to conduct cross-table discussions.

In addition to the new format, more thought was given to inviting appropriate speakers with a wide spectrum of professional expertise and their order of presentation. The first speaker, Dr. **Marlys Koschinsky** from the University of Windsor, was a PhD with a strong background in research and teaching but also in academic administration (she is currently serving as the Dean of Science at the University of Windsor). The second speaker, Dr. **Sharla Sutherland** from Afexa Life Sciences, Edmonton, was again a female PhD but who had gained management experience from within a fast-growing pharmaceutical company. The last speaker, Dr. **Rob Hegele** from the University of Western Ontario, was a senior scientist and a physician who is known all over the world for his cutting edge research in the area of cardiovascular genetics and endocrinology.

From her inspirational opening talk, Dr. Koschinsky gave to the Workshop what every organizer and participant would ever desire. She started off by giving an account of some of the greatest female scientists and Nobel laureates of the world. She also showed the many career paths that are open for a trainee in science after obtaining a masters or PhD, for example careers in academia, industry, research services, administration, etc. She stated that it is better that trainees make up their own minds and try to find which area interests them most. She then took the audience through her own life/professional story. She shared with us how she entered science and studied for a PhD, how she ended up in academic research and how she obtained her first and subsequent faculty positions and finally the Deanship at the University of Windsor. This whole idea of her sharing her life's journey gave so much insight to the trainees; to actually hear someone of Dr. Koschinsky's professional standing telling us that she also had faced problems all through her career and also through her family life, and how she managed all of them to be where she is now was inspirational. She also gave some tips to the audience about simultaneously managing research, teaching, the financial aspects of grants and administrative responsibilities, and even family life.

Dr. Sutherland brought another perspective to the event, that of the scientist in industry. But this background wasn't just of any industry, but of a new and upcoming venture, Afexa Life Sciences Inc. Dr. Sutherland, being the Vice President (Scientific and Regulatory Affairs) of the company, apprised the trainees about how to work in a growing and developing company and rise higher in the company's management in such a short amount of time. She took the audience through the different levels

of an industry and showed how anyone can find out what area they might be able to fit in. The different areas of work she discussed were: quality control (which involves lab control and bench work) and quality assurance (good manufacturing practices to meet quality standards); regulatory affairs (involves product development processes, finding product paths to markets and getting premarket and clinical authorization); intellectual property management (patenting and trade marking); clinical affairs (planning market opportunities and clinical trials); scientific affairs (translating the scientific message for non-scientific people and finding partnerships); business development and professional education and marketing. She gave the positives and negatives, and the qualities needed for a person to work in any of these areas. In the end, Dr. Sutherland emphasized the following facts: one should expect to enter the industry on an entry level position and then try to make their way up; to be sure of why one wants to join this workforce; to prepare a good CV and cover letter with professional and extracurricular aspects; to be open-minded about finding a job and even be ready to work voluntarily just to enter an organization of interest; to take risks when needed; to be a team player and good listener; and to always look out for good mentors and critical feedback.

The last talk was delivered by Dr. Hegele, a highly successful scientist who has published immensely and trained many students and fellows over the years. Dr. Hegele's talk was comprised of a lot of good advice and tips for the young researchers from finding a good topic to work on, to finding the right place and the right person to work with. As an example, he put forward his own story of how he was able to find the best mentors in the field every time during his graduate studies, fellowship and his initial faculty positions. All this resulted in his ultimate success. As a necessity, he stressed on the need for the trainees to publish and to look for good opportunities around them, all the time. According to Dr. Hegele, the secret to success in life science research is perseverance, integrity, hard work and generosity.

The talks were followed by the round-table discussions at which the trainees had loads of questions for all the speakers. According to the evaluations received after the workshop, the trainees particularly approved of these discussion sessions as this gave them an easy opportunity to ask each speaker all kinds of personal to professional questions.

After the discussion period and a working lunch, we witnessed another new inclusion to this year's workshop. This was a series of seventeen 5-minute presentations from presenters who would later be manning posters at the CSATVB Annual Meeting. These presentations



Guest speakers Marlys Koschinsky and Rob Hegele after the Workshop



TAC members Robin MacLaren and Nabeel Ghayur enjoy the Dinner



gave the presenters an additional option to get in touch with their audience and especially the judges. Like the workshop, this 2-hour session was also overwhelmingly approved by the trainees.

In view of the success of the 2009 Workshop, the CSATVB Executive and Council has recently given its approval for the TAC to organize a Trainees' Workshop at the CSATVB Annual Meeting in Montreal in 2010. The tentative theme of the next Trainees' Workshop will be '**Surviving Graduate Studies**' and this will be take place on 24th October, 2010. Hope to see you all there again in Montreal!

As in previous years, the CSATVB Annual Dinner was held away from any activities in the Conference Centre to give it more character and make it a special occasion. Following the Workshop and trainees' presentations, the Annual Dinner 2009 was held on 25th October at the Union Bank Inn, Edmonton. The Union Bank Inn was selected because of its history and significance in the downtown Edmonton area. Having been built as the Union Bank early in the 20th century, the building was converted into a hotel in the year 2000. The UBI has since been given various awards for its cuisine and is duly recognized by the city.

The evening began with an opportunity for the Society members to mingle. As is usual on these occasions, a large number of regular members, trainees, and invited guests turned up for the Dinner but with the assistance of the staff, seats were found for all. After having some drinks and networking during 'cocktail hour', the diners were presented with an excellent meal. Throughout the evening, a string trio from the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra played in the dining room which made the environment even more attractive.

As it was the end of tenure for the CSATVB President **Mark Hatton**, he was given a very warm farewell from some of the Past-Presidents and also by the Incoming-President **Bassam Nassar**, who also presented the Outgoing-President with a traditional Society souvenir, an inscribed gavel. Later, the 2009 CSATVB Award Recipients were also announced and presented with their awards: **Dawei Zhang** of University of Alberta, Edmonton, received the New Investigator Grant-in-Aid Award, and **Bruce McManus** of University of British Columbia, Vancouver, received the Scientific Excellence Award. Like the scientific Meeting and the Workshop, the annual Dinner proved a great success! This year, the annual Dinner will take place on 24th October 2010 in Montreal, QC, where the CSATVB Annual Meeting is planned to take place during the CCC from 23-26th October 2010. Hope to see you all there!

Nabeel Ghayur, *Roving Reporter*

CSATVB Scientific Meeting, Edmonton, October 26-27, 2009



Inside the Shaw Convention Centre, Edmonton

After a busy Sunday (see Nabeel Ghayur's account of the Trainee's Workshop and Dinner), we gathered early on Monday morning at the Shaw Conference Centre for the scientific sessions which would be spread over the next two days. These consisted of four oral and three poster sessions, three special lectures and three symposia. Of the three special lectures, **Angela Devlin** the NIGIA winner in 2007, presented her recent findings on Monday morning in an inspiring talk entitled 'Diet, DNA methylation and Vascular Disease'. Later the same day, **Marie-Claude Vohl** (Université de Laval), the 'M. Daria Haust' Research Award winner in 2008, talked about her studies on the 'Genetics of Metabolic Syndrome'. On Tuesday, **Bruce McManus** (St. Paul's Hospital and UBC, Vancouver), the CSATVB Scientific Excellence Award winner for 2009, spoke about the highs and lows of his extraordinarily productive research career in a talk entitled 'Towards Preventing Injury and Modifying Repair in Allograft Vessels'. All three were excellent well-attended presentations as measured by the thoughtful questions from appreciative audiences.

The topics of the three Symposia this year covered the breadth of research interests within the society. The first was a joint Symposium between the Canadian Hypertension Society (CHS) and CSATVB entitled 'Determinants of Vascular Stiffness in Health and Disease' and organized by **Pierre Moreau** (Université de Montréal) and **Scott Heximer** (University of Toronto). **Pierre Moreau** spoke first and he introduced the development of fibrosis within the arterial system and went on to evaluate the contribution of N-glycation and AGE/RAGE signaling to smooth muscle cells, particularly in diabetes. **Cecilia Giachelli** (University of Washington, Seattle) then considered the other contributor to arterial stiffening, calcification, and the phenotypic change to vascular smooth muscle cells that may result in chronic kidney

disease. The final speaker was **Michelle Bendeck** (University of Toronto) who considered the role of collagen and collagen receptors in signaling in vascular smooth muscle cells, particularly in atherosclerotic plaque development and calcification during arterial aging.

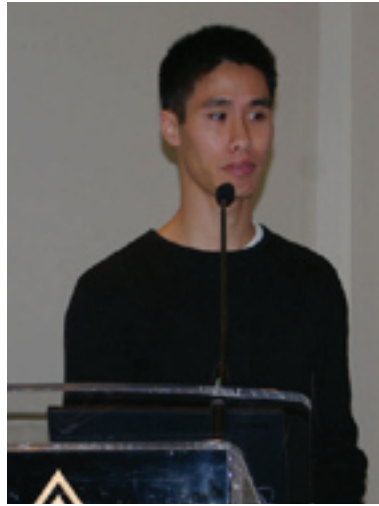
The second Symposium, organized by **Rob Hegele** (Robarts Research Institute, University of Western Ontario) dealt with the 'Genetic Basis of Lipid Disorders'. The first speaker, **Ruth MacPherson** (University of Ottawa Heart Institute), introduced the breadth of genome-wide association studies for coronary artery disease and gradually focused on the specific alleles of risk in hyperlipidemia with which she was concerned. **Jacques Genest** (McGill University, Montreal) continued this approach and discussed his studies of the genetics of HDL metabolism in patients. The final speaker was **Rob Hegele** who explored further avenues within the genetics of hyperlipidemia coupled with the contribution of environmental factors including diet, and finished with a genetic appreciation of the Frederickson classification of hyperlipoproteinemia.

Finally, the topic for the President's Symposium (organizer **Mark Hatton**, McMaster University), 'Thrombus Formation in real Time', examined the recent contributions of intravital imaging to the dynamics of platelet behaviour *in vivo*. During his introduction, Mark Hatton mentioned to the audience that the late **Richard Haslam**, a professor and researcher at McMaster who died in February 2009, had been a pioneer in developing procedures to identify components of the signal transduction pathways within the platelet over the past 40 years. At the request of the speakers, he proposed that the Symposium be dedicated to Richard's memory. **Peter Gross** (McMaster University) opened with a discussion of confocal microscopic methods that are used in real-time imaging of the mouse vascular system and how these methods can reveal the behavior of platelets during thrombus formation and the behavior of individual components during platelet activation. **Louisa Dowal** (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA) continued with a chemical genetic analysis of platelet activation in real time as revealed by the use of small molecule inhibitors of the PAR-1 receptor. The final speaker was **HeYu Ni** (University of Toronto) who discussed the potential role of various plasma proteins other than fibrinogen that may support platelet aggregation and thrombus growth.

On Tuesday, before the President's Symposium, the names of this year's Young Investigator Award winners were announced: **Maude Caron-Jobin** (Université de Laval) and **Eugene Chu** (UBC) for their podium presentations and **Rabban Mangat** (University of Alberta) for a poster award. Congratulations to all three winners!



Maude Caron-Jobin



Eugene Chu



Rabban Mangat

On behalf of the entire society, I (now as Past President) thank Scott Heximer and the Education Committee (**Garry Shen, Geoff Werstuck, Jim Russell, and Pierre Douville**) for organizing a scientific meeting which, once again, embraced all three major interests of the society – atherosclerosis, thrombosis and vascular

biology. The attendance at the oral sessions was generally very good throughout the meeting, and was comfortably accommodated by the size of room allocated by the Congress organizers. Thank you to all – speakers, poster presenters, audience members – for contributing to our success.

Mark Hatton, *Editor*

Major decisions taken at the CSATVB Executive and Council meetings in Edmonton (October 25, 2009) and in Toronto (January 23, 2010), and at the Annual General Meeting (Edmonton, October 27, 2009)



Members of the CSATVB Executive and Council, Edmonton, 2009

Major issues which have occupied the Agendas of the Executive and Council for the past two meetings and the Agenda of the AGM in 2009 include:

1. Revisions to the CSATVB Bylaws (which were sent to all members in the summer). At the Edmonton meeting, new wording was proposed concerning the proposed status and composition of the “Organizing Committee”. This body would in future be named

the “Council”. However, at the AGM, the comments from the floor included further modifications to the new bylaws in respect of the definitions and voting rights of the various categories of membership. It was generally agreed that the revised by laws would be reviewed again by the *ad hoc* Constitution Committee and brought to the Council at the January meeting in 2010.

At the January meeting in 2010, the Council approved the new wording for further consideration by a constitution lawyer. The legally worded final version of the revisions will be ready for presentation and (hopefully) approval by the general membership at the AGM in Montreal in October, 2010. For more details of these changes, please see ‘**Constitution News**’ below and the draft minutes of the AGM (October, 2009).

2. ISA 2018: In Edmonton, the Council agreed in principle to support a future bid by CSATVB to host the International Symposium on Atherosclerosis (ISA) in 2018 in Toronto. The society will be expected to

submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the International Atherosclerosis Society in late 2011 and, if the LOI is accepted, then submit a formal bid for presentation at the ISA in Sydney, Australia, in 2012.

3. CSATVB's 25th Anniversary: In Edmonton, Council agreed to organize a gala dinner during the annual meeting in Montreal, October 2010, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the society. At the Toronto meeting in January, 2010, (and in his Report above) President **Bassam Nassar** announced that a venue for the dinner has been chosen and that plans are well advanced.

4. Annual Dues: In view of the currently stressed state of the society's budget, Council agreed in Edmonton

to raise the annual dues by 100% in 2010; thus, for the foreseeable future regular and trainee members will each be expected to pay \$50 and \$20 per annum respectively. A motion was approved at AGM.

5. Online Newsletter: In Edmonton, Council agreed that a printed issue of the Newsletter will no longer be sent to all members thus saving printing and mailing costs; in future, the biannual Newsletter will be sent to members by e-mail and will be posted on the website. A motion was approved AGM.

The *draft* minutes of the AGM (Edmonton, October 27) are available at [www.csatvb.ca/about us/AGM minutes](http://www.csatvb.ca/about_us/AGM_minutes). These minutes will be tabled for approval at the next AGM in Montreal, October 26, 2010.

Mark Hatton, *Past President*,
and **Bassam Nassar**, *President*

Society News: Bruce McManus's donation to CSATVB



Dr. **Bruce McManus** was the well-deserved winner of the 2009 Award for CSATVB Scientific Excellence At the Edmonton meeting on October 27, 2009, Dr. McManus was presented with his award, a cheque for \$2,000, prior to giving the audience a lively, well-crafted account of his extensive and advantageous research exploits over the past 20 years. Following the lecture, Bruce in his modest way calmly announced to Dr. Hatton, CSATVB President, and Dr. Gotlieb, the organizer of the Scientific Excellence Award, that he wished to donate the award of \$2,000 to the society and he requested that his donation be used to support future travel awards to trainees. On behalf of the society, we formally thank Dr. Bruce McManus for this generous and selfless donation. If others would like to make a donation to the society, we (and particularly the Treasurer) would be delighted! Remember, the CSATVB is a registered charity and, through the Treasurer's office, we will send a receipt to offset Canadian taxes.

Avrum Gotlieb's Promotion to Assoc Dean/VP of Research, University of Toronto



Dr. **Avrum Gotlieb** has been appointed as the Interim Vice-Dean, Research and International Relations at the University of Toronto, beginning November 1, 2009. Congratulations Avrum!

Dr. Gotlieb served as the founding Chair of the Department of Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology from 1997 to 2008. He is a staff pathologist at the University Health Network, a senior scientist at the Toronto Hospital Research Institute, and is a member of numerous national and international scientific committees. He has also been a member of CSATVB for many years, and in the period 2003-5 served as President. He is currently a Councilor of the society.

Dr. Stewart Whitman

It is with great sadness that we announce the recent death of Dr. **Stewart Whitman**; Stewart passed away on Friday, February 19th, 2010. Stewart was the NIGIA winner in 2004 and became a Councilor of the CSATVB in 2006. The University of Ottawa has issued the following obituary:

“Stewart Whitman received his B.Sc. in Microbiology and Immunology, M.Sc. in Anatomy and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry in 1997 at the University of Western Ontario. For his accomplishments, he was awarded scholarships from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the MRC. He was the first to establish that remnant lipoproteins, especially following oxidative modification, induce macrophage foam cell formation; this is a critical factor in atherogenesis. Dr. Whitman was appointed in 2001 as a scientist at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, where he was associated with the members of Lipoprotein and Atherosclerosis Research Group and the Vascular Biology Group. His appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine of the Faculty of Medicine gave him access to the expertise and support of the core pathologists. With the support of UOHI and the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, he set up the Histopathology Core Laboratory, which provides state of the art analysis of specimens with cardiovascular pathologies for scientists across the Ottawa medical and scientific community. In 2008, this laboratory was dedicated to him as

the Stewart Whitman Histopathology Core laboratory in recognition of his expertise and contributions.

As a scientist, Dr. Whitman was a man of integrity, honesty and honor; he was a great inspiration and role model for his students, whose support during his illness was uplifting for all around him. The courage of Dr. Whitman to continue his work and devote himself to his students and collaborators during the painful last three years has motivated many around him.

His colleagues at the Heart Institute will ensure that all his work under way is finished and published, as well as organize a Symposium on Atherosclerosis to be named after him that will attract scientists from across Canada and the US who share his interests and will celebrate the work of a great man.”

At his death, Stewart was an Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, and Co-Director of the Vascular Biology Laboratory at the University of Ottawa. Stewart will be greatly missed by all and we offer our heartfelt sympathy to his family. The family has suggested that anyone wishing to honour Stewart to please consider sending a donation to the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, or the Canadian Cancer Society, or the Elizabeth Bruyere Palliative Care Facility, Ottawa.

Vascular Matrix Biology and Bioengineering Workshop II, Whistler, BC; March 16-19, 2009

The Second Vascular Matrix Biology and Bioengineering Workshop was held at the Telus Conference Center, Whistler; Drs. **Michelle Bendeck**, University of Toronto and **Cecilia Giachelli**, University of Washington were the workshop organizers. Elaine C. Davis, McGill University and Themis Kyriakides, Yale University were the workshop co-organizers. This workshop was one of a kind, and aimed at defining and analyzing important problems related to vascular development and disease. The meeting provided a forum for basic, clinical and applied



“...some adventurous souls hit the slopes of Whistler for skiing...”

researchers to share their recent and novel science, and in addition opportunities for new research were identified.

A highlight of the workshop was the keynote address by Dr. Marlene Rabinovitch of Stanford University on vascular matrix in pulmonary disease. Drs. **Avrum Gotlieb** and **Peter Sabatini** provided an excellent overview and tribute to the contributions of the late Dr. **Lowell Langille**, to whom the meeting was dedicated. Other talks and posters covered the following areas: Matrix Remodeling in Vascular Disease, Matrix Genetics and Development, Matrix Calcification in Arteries and Heart Valves, Matrix Signaling, Vascular Networks and Cardiovascular Engineering, Vascular Cell-Biomaterial Interactions and Vascular Morphogenesis/Stem Cells. The meeting was well attended with 110 scientists, including 40 trainees, and we had a lively poster session each evening. The CSATVB awarded travel funds to very grateful trainee members. Scientists were able to interact over breakfast, lunch and coffee breaks, and some adventurous souls hit the slopes of Whistler for skiing, snowboarding or dog sledding.

Michelle Bendeck, University of Toronto

Visit by Dan Sparks and HeYu Ni to the Chinese Atherosclerosis Society Meeting in Huhehaote, China



HeYu Ni at the CAS Meeting

Drs. **Heyu Ni** and **Daniel Sparks** attended the 10th Annual Chinese Symposium on Atherosclerotic Disease in China, July 2009, as representatives of the Canadian Society of Atherosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology. The meeting was held in a picturesque Mongolian-styled conference facility just outside Huhehaote, the capital of Inner Mongolia, and was attended by over 800 participants.

These participants came from research institutions all over China, including Dr. **George Liu** (Peking University) who, in 2008, was an invited guest speaker to the CSATVB Scientific Meeting in Toronto. The meeting was also attended by other international experts in the cardiovascular field, including Dr. Alan Daugherty (University of Kentucky, USA), Dr. Patrick Resen (Leiden University, Holland), Dr. Toru Kita (Kyoto University, Japan), Dr. Qingbo Xu (King's College London, UK), Dr. Yuqing Eugene Chen (University of Michigan, USA), Dr. Jianglin Fan (Yamanashi University, Japan) and Dr. Ganghong Tian (Institute for Biodiagnostics, National Research Council Canada).

The data presented by speakers and in the electronic poster sessions was most impressive. There has been a significant yearly escalation of high impact publications in leading international journals of cardiovascular disease from the Chinese research community. This well reflects the dramatic economic growth in the country and the large amount of research funds now available for scientists in the field. It is notable that there are 160 million Chinese living with hyperlipidemia; approximately five times the total



Dan Sparks with colleagues in Huhehaote

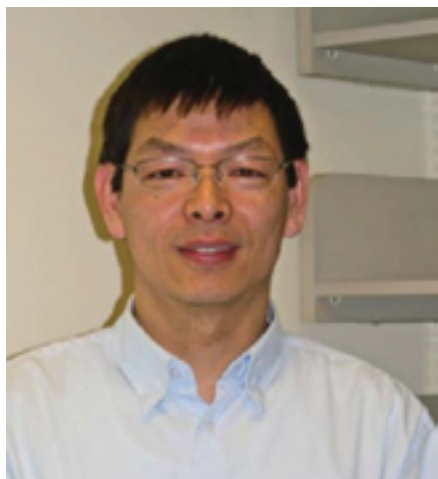
population of Canada. This provides both a growing burden for healthcare systems, as well as a vast population available for fruitful clinical and scientific collaborative study.

Heyu Ni (University of Toronto), presented an overview of the “role of platelets in thrombosis and atherosclerosis” and **Dan Sparks** (University of Ottawa Heart Institute), presented an update of his laboratory’s efforts to “develop novel therapeutics to raise HDL and block inflammation”. Both presentations were very well received by the international audience and led to collaborative discussion and opportunities. Heyu Ni initiated a collaboration with Dr. Wenhua Ling, at the School of Public Health, Sun Yat-Sen University, to investigate the role of platelets in the development of atherosclerosis, and. Dan Sparks initiated a collaboration with **George Liu**, to investigate the anti-inflammatory activity of linoleic acid phospholipids in mice and their potential to prevent inflammatory diseases of the heart and brain.

CSATVB sponsored participation of Canadian scientists in the Chinese Atherosclerosis Symposia has forged a bridge between the cardiovascular research efforts in Canada and China. Hyperlipidemia is a critical healthcare issue that is endemic to both Canada and China. The massive Chinese population provides an unparalleled opportunity for basic science research and clinical studies. Participation by Canadian and Chinese scientists in future events is expected to establish new and important collaborative programs that may hold promise for further international research efforts into the development of novel therapeutic initiatives to treat and prevent cardiovascular disease.

Daniel Sparks, *University of Ottawa Heart Institute*,
and **HeYu Ni**, *St. Michael's Hospital and University of Toronto*

Introducing Dr. Dawei Zhang, NIGIA Winner, 2009



“I joined the Department of Pediatrics, University of Alberta, on August 1, 2008 as an Assistant Professor. I obtained my PhD in Biochemistry at Queen’s University, Ontario, in 2002, and received three-year post-doctoral training (2003 to 2005) in Dr. Helen Hobbs’ laboratory in the Department of Molecular Genetics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas (UTSW), USA. I then went on to work in Howard Hughes Medical Institute (Dr. Helen Hobbs’ Laboratory), UTSW as a Research Associate (2005 to 2008). I have received

several awards during my undergraduate and graduate studies and was the winner of the James R. Gillette Drug Metabolism Best Paper of 2006.

Research projects in my laboratory are focus on atherosclerosis and lipoproteins. Atherosclerosis leads to cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death in the Western societies. My studies will address fundamental questions in the development and progress of atherosclerosis, such as how to enhance HDL-mediated reverse cholesterol transport in macrophages, and how to reduce plasma LDL-C concentrations. My ultimate goal is to identify novel proteins relevant to cardiovascular disease and the translation of this knowledge to develop novel therapeutics with improved efficacy.

I received a 5-year operating grant titled “Molecular Mechanism of ATP-Binding Cassette Transporter G1-mediated Sterol Transport” from CIHR in 2009, as well as a New Investigator Travel Award from Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. I also received the 2009 Pfizer Cardiovascular Research Award from Pfizer Canada. I like sports such as basketball and soccer, and working in my garden while away from my work. Finally I thank the CSATVB for awarding me the NIGIA for 2009. I look forward to telling the society more about my research in 2011”.

Dawei Zhang, *University of Alberta*

Constitution News

In the last News Letter we reported a revision to the Constitution. Any changes to the Constitution must be approved by a majority of the Membership and, to that end, a special meeting was held during the AGM in Edmonton. A copy of the proposed revised Constitution was circulated by Email to all members, with an invitation to those who would not be able to attend the meeting to return a proxy vote. We received approximately 20 replies and for those, we thank you.

A summary of the changes and of the important points that were raised at the meeting are available on line in the *draft Minutes of the AGM*, October 2009 (go to www.csatvb.ca/about-us/AGM-minutes).

The comments included questioning the status of non-Canadians, specifically non-Canadians not resident in Canada. It was proposed and generally agreed that these scientists can be admitted as Associate Members, but may

not vote or hold office in the society; non-Canadian Scientists resident and working in Canada are eligible for Regular Membership. Non-Canadian students in full time training and resident in Canada can be admitted as Trainee Members and be eligible to vote, to receive awards and to present at meetings.

A new category, “Complementary Membership” will be created for guest speakers who are not already members. This would usually be for two years, with no payment of annual dues and no voting privileges.

The Council will have the power to create new standing committees as required.

All these comments have been incorporated into a revised, and hopefully final, version of the revised bylaws of the Constitution. Having been approved by the Executive and Council in January, 2010, it will be sent to you as a PDF later this year. Please respond.

Mary Richardson, *Assistant Editor and Archivist*

Letters to the Editor

When I stepped down as Editor of the Newsletter at the meeting in Edmonton, I was very sad because I enjoyed my term in this office, but I recognized the need for a new approach. I congratulate you on becoming the new Editor, and I know the Newsletter is in good hands. You have the exciting task of introducing a new format; the electronic version will save the society money and be environmentally responsible.

One disappointment I felt as Editor was the lack of

feedback from members. I know everyone is very busy, but in order for us to provide the information and commentary that resonates with members, it is important to be aware of relevant issues. Please invite all readers to express their comments on line to the Editor.

Finally, if any reader knows of a member who would prefer the Newsletter in hard copy, please either let us know, or run off a copy and forward it on.

Sincerely

Mary Richardson, PhD (now *Assistant Editor*)

Dundas, Ontario, L9H7B8

[Editor: Thank you Mary. I agree that feedback from readers is essential to any thriving Newsletter. I will do my best to promote and cajole comments and letters!]

Dear Editor: A Novel Fund Raising Suggestion

Due to the lack of funding being offered this year to CSATVB from traditional pharmaceutical companies, I propose that we approach smaller companies (more geared to basic research) with alternative approaches to donating.

I propose an **On-Line Silent Auction**. While unusual, this may offer the visibility and advertising that vendors are hoping for with a smaller cost for them. An On-line silent auction also offers an incredible benefit to our members (and an incentive for increased new membership) while potentially generating a large source of corporate donations for the CSATVB.

How it could work:

1. Companies like Abcam, Invitrogen, Qiagen etc. would donate **products** (value from \$3000) to CSATVB for our silent auction.
 - Note: Products cost the company significantly less than the retail value.
2. On a specific date we would have an on-line auction for these products that would be available to all CSATVB members. The on-line auction could run for a restricted time, say 2 hours.
 - As only CSATVB members in good standing are eligible for the auction, this may encourage members in poor standing to pay their dues and new members to join.
3. We would set a minimum value for each item; for

example, a 'Countess' cell counter from Invitrogen (plus the reagents) valued at about \$7000 could have a starting auction price of \$2500, Investigators would offer increasing amounts for the item. At the end of the 2 hours, the highest bidder wins the item and pays the company the amount stated. For example, by the end of 2 hours, the 'Countess' might have had a bid of \$5500.

- The company would collect the \$5500 from the investigator using the normal payment methods.
- The company would then donate the full \$5500 to the CSATVB; **this would be their tax deductible donation.**
- The cost to the company would only be the wholesale cost of the machine, say \$700.
- The cost to the investigator would be \$5500 for a machine she wanted anyway and for which she would have paid \$7000.
- The CSATVB enjoys a donation of \$5500, increased membership, and the increased publicity from this unusual funding approach.

I imagine that a company like Abcam could offer a \$5000 gift certificate for \$5000 worth of antibodies with an expiration date of within a year or so. Qiagen could offer a combination package of mini & maxi DNA preps, RNA isolation kits etc valued at say \$10,000. A light microscope, cell incubator, full set of pipettes, complete starter kit for

tissue culture, water bath, 'Countess' cell counter, PCR machine, iblot dry transfer machine, centrifuge, gift certificate for \$5000 worth of chemical supplies from VWR, Biorad western blot apparatus, chemiluminescence detector, MACS variety set up kit, HP computer, \$3000 worth of gloves, etc... any of these items could be appropriate donations to the silent auction.

I think that we would need to say that there can only be one of each item. BUT a single company could donate, say, 10 different items. We would recognize the donors by the retail value of the items that they donate. For example, if Invitrogen offered a 'Countess' (\$7000), an iblot + starting kit (\$3000), a combo of DNA and RNA kits worth \$5000 then they would have donated \$15,000 in retail value. We could introduce new levels for donor appreciation, such as 'bronze' for a donation of \$3000-10,000; 'silver', 10,001-25,000; 'gold', \$25,001-50,000; and 'platinum' \$50,000+. Invitrogen, in this example, would get recognition at the 'silver' level. I also feel that this could become a regular money raiser, perhaps repeated every 6 months.

We can discuss the idea of allowing non-members to participate in the auction for a flat cost that is the same as our membership fees. This would open the bidding to groups that do other types of research, but it disadvantages

our CSTAVB members, so we might want to do one a year just for CSATVB members, and one for us plus the rest?

In order to ensure that no one new investigator uses this opportunity to buy a full lab set up at below cost, we should say that a bidder is limited to, say, a maximum of 5 deals (for example). I do not think we will need to put a cap on the bidding (I doubt very much that any researcher will be willing to pay above the retail cost just to help out the CSATVB!) so we only need to impose minimum bids, and perhaps a minimum increment for increases? For example, if the bidding for a 'Countess' starts at \$2500, then we could impose a minimum increase of \$250 more than the previous bid.

I think that appropriate donation items will be between \$3,000 and \$50,000. We want them to be items with enough general interest that at least a few labs will be bidding (and thus increasing the price and the amount of the donation that we will receive from the companies).

I ran this crazy idea by Mark Hatton at the Edmonton meeting (October, 2009) and he helped to solidify some of the thoughts and make it more practical. Mark also encouraged me to write this out and share it with everyone, so thank you for getting this far!

Thoughts anyone?

Robin MacLaren, PhD

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, University of Ottawa, Ottawa Heart Institute, 40 Ruskin St., Ottawa, Ontario K1Y4W7

Future Scientific meetings

'Future Scientific Meetings' has been a feature for several years in the Newsletter and more recently on the website <www.csatvb.ca/news&events>. To keep the on-line Newsletter as short as possible and to avoid repetition, 'Future Scientific Meetings' has been moved permanently to the website. Naturally, we will do our best to keep this webpage up-to-date, and any information of upcoming meetings from members is always appreciated.

[Editor: This is a brave and innovative venture; the main question is, is it feasible? Please send your thoughts to either Robin (romaclaren@ohri.ca) or me (hattonm@mcmaster.ca). All responses will be forwarded to members of the Finance Committee for further consideration and reviewed in the next Newsletter.]

On a lighter note: In praise of Statins and.....Mushrooms ?

Being retired, I admit I now have too much time on my hands as the following diversion will reveal. Recently, I was invited by a journal editor to review a manuscript on the mobilization of endothelial progenitor cells *in vivo*. I must point out that EPCs are not my strong point but, what the heck, I might learn something; I accepted the task. In one section, the authors asserted that one of the pleiotropic effects of certain statins leads to an increased migration and differentiation of EPCs from bone marrow. I have always been confused by the prevalence of different

names for statins produced by different companies and so, with time to indulge, I decided to read about the properties and pleiotropic effects of different statins. This departure led me unexpectedly to reach back in my memory to when I studied for my first degree... In botany. As a student in the early 1960's, I was fascinated by fungi and their remarkable abilities to producing agents with medicinal properties. Quite why plants in general should produce biochemically-active products to benefit the health of animals when animals ultimately

are wholly dependent on plants for their existence was a curiosity that intrigues me even today. What drives this evolutionary trend, after all, what's in it for the plant? Nevertheless, I've read somewhere that ~ 50% of active pharmaceuticals marketed today are directly or indirectly derived from products of the plant kingdom.

Anyway, back to the statins. I learned that monocolin K, a form of mevinolin, was isolated from a mould, *Monascus ruber*, by Endo in 1979 and discovered to be an inhibitor of HMG Co reductase (1), which as we all know is the rate-determining enzyme in the pathway leading to the synthesis of cholesterol and other isoprene derivatives. When used experimentally in hypercholesterolemic rats, a significant reduction in LDL cholesterol was observed but with unwanted side effects. The significance of the anticholesterolemic effect shown by mevinolin was not lost on the researchers and the hunt was on to find related products in other fungi, preferably with fewer or no side effects. Lovastatin, a relative of mevinolin, was the first statin to be thoroughly characterized and used in humans. Lovastatin was first discovered in 1979 in the mycelium of another fungus, *Aspergillus terreus*, by Monaghan et al. working for Merck. In 1980, Alberts et al. (2) reported the structure and biochemical properties of lovastatin. Compared to monocolin K, lovastatin was shown to exhibit more selective and greater inhibitory properties toward HMG CoA reductase *in vivo* and with fewer side effects. The possibilities that lovastatin could control elevated plasma cholesterol levels in lipid-laden humans was quickly realized by Merck who patented the drug in 1980 as a potential anticholesterolemic agent; FDA approval for its use clinically was granted in 1987.

Several years later, the oyster mushroom, *Pleurotus ostreatus*, was discovered to be a readily available source of lovastatin (3). Indeed, oyster mushrooms contain lovastatin

equivalent to as much as 2.8% of dry weight (4). Since then, the inclusion of oyster mushrooms in the diet of hypercholesterolemic rats or rabbits has been shown by many (e.g. 5, 6) to also lower LDL cholesterol levels by as much as 40%. However, to my knowledge, no studies in humans have yet been reported. Aside from benefitting those with hypercholesterolemia, statins are also claimed to slow the advance of prostate cancer (e.g. 7). To add to the intrigue, there is a claim that a polysaccharide extracted from oyster mushrooms decreases tumor size, notably within the prostate gland (8). Now hasn't that grabbed your attention!



The Oyster mushroom (image by Jean-Pol Grandmont)

The good news is that oyster mushrooms are probably available in your local supermarket. So, enjoy oyster mushrooms either raw in salads, in soups, or sautéed, fried or grilled. Incidentally, I found some fascinating recipes using oyster mushrooms at www.lecopin.ca. Go for it; get that "bad cholesterol" under control with gustatory satisfaction and possibly without the direct use of medication. But don't overcook them, I'm told they tend to become chewy.

Mark Hatton, Editor

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For more information about the society, its background, current committees, past Newsletters, etc., please go to our website, www.csatvb.ca.

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