

2 TESLA



Spin Down Under



G'Day! I thought for this blog, I'd write a little bit about how the Annual Meeting gets put together. To make things abundantly clear, I'll of course be illustrating the procedure with pictures I recently took of the seals on Kangaroo Island, South Australia.

Choosing The Site

Every year our Director of Meetings, Sandra Daudlin, travels the world looking at potential conference sites. The meeting sites, as you may have noticed, are on a 4-year rotation of Western North America, Europe, Eastern North America, and Asia-Pacific, roughly reflecting the geographic distribution of our membership. After careful review of 10-12 responses to Sandra's Requests for Proposal from cities in a particular region for a particular year, assessing suitability of the center as well as the ability of the hotel community to accommodate our attendees, a reduced number are presented for consideration and discussion within the Executive Board, with a subset of 2-3 suitable sites typically presented to the Board of Trustees. This all happens usually 5-6 years before the actual meeting, which is largely necessary to secure the size of the venue we need for the length of time we need it. The Board's vote decides the venue of choice. After this, our team of Roberta and Sandra conduct lengthy negotiations with both the conference site and the host city.



(left) This seal pup illustrates the typical personality of Sandra Daudlin, ISMRM Director of Meetings, when she's off work and not at a hockey game (Canadian...). (right) The actual Sandra Daudlin after finishing the Warrior Dash, the toughest race of them all, illustrating her tenacity to get us the best conference site possible. Fear her, the Warrior Princess.

An interesting fact - Sandra tells me that Melbourne estimates we will bring AUD \$39 million to their city the week of our conference. I've already proposed to hold the 2020 meeting at my lab. Negotiations are ongoing.

Choosing the Program Committee and the Chair

The Annual Meeting Program Committee is made of 50-60 members of our society, each elected to a 3-year term. They determine the scientific and educational content of the meeting. Since roughly 1/3 of them rotate off each year, the incoming president, in concert with the incoming program chair, invites new members to join, typically in the spring (March-April). The content of last year's submitted abstracts along with expertise of the remaining AMPC members are considered, and the invitees are chosen based on the expertise needed for the coming year. Sadly, members only get to serve once in their lifetime. I seriously believe that the AMPC is the best committee I have ever served on. If you volunteer for this committee and don't get chosen, please don't give up - it's worth the wait.



(left) Each year the incoming ISMRM president considers whom to invite to the AMPC from hundreds of willing members, all of whom are very excellent candidates. (right) Said president then hopes for a non-violent reaction from those who were not asked.



(left) It's puzzling for the vice-president elect to choose the right vice-chair elect, but (right) having the right trio of vice-chair elect, vice-chair, and chair can really energize the meeting.

The vice-chair elect of the AMPC is chosen, typically in the spring, by the newly-elected vice-president elect. The shackles are then fitted, and they serve the next 3 years in the service of our glorious society. This position traditionally alternates between an M.D. and a Ph.D., although in one shining example of a world made right, the salary remains the same.

The January 2011 Construction Meeting (Montreal)

Work on the Melbourne meeting began in earnest this past January 2011, at the AMPC construction meeting held in Montreal. This is where Education courses for Melbourne were chosen, along with course organizers. Plenary topics and named lecturers for Melbourne were also chosen. Oral scientific sessions for the Montreal meeting were also organized here, based on the scored abstracts that just came in. But that's history now (Caroline, I feel so guilty for saying that).

Between this construction meeting and the May 2011 annual meeting the education course organizers worked out the details of what talks should be in each course, and picked primary and backup speakers for each talk. Plenary organizers did the same.

The May 2011 Meeting (also Montreal)

The AMPC meets (typically) on the Sunday of the annual meeting, and each year it is, I think, the most boring meeting of the AMPC. So it's awesome that this is the first glimpse our newly chosen members get of the committee. Lowers expectations.

Here we went through every talk of every education course for Melbourne, making sure that talks don't overlap, that - as best we can - we've covered a broad variety of subjects, that we have the right potential speakers, and that nobody will be asked to give more than two education talks. If my math is right, it's about 50,000 talks we have to review. We also discuss plenary speakers.

After this, the education course organizers make any changes that are necessary and invite speakers, all under the supervision of the AMPC vice-chair, who is in charge of education. Garry Gold, MD, Dean of Education for Melbourne, is that person. We should have this all set by this August or September, except for the one organizer who put things off until the last minute. I don't know who that is yet, but I'll let you know.

November 9, 2011

Abstract Deadline Day, the day when all of your work for the year is reduced to a few thousand characters and sent out for anonymous and harsh criticism. While the abstract submission site typically opens in August, there are consistently more than 3000 abstract submitted on the last two days. Roberta tells me that at 23:59 EST, the office phone predictably starts ringing from people begging to leave the site open just a little bit longer. When I was young(er), I remember that on the night of the final episode of the wildly popular TV series MASH, American cities and towns measured a distinct series of downward spikes in the pressure of the city water supply. These spikes coincided with the commercial breaks of that one show, due to the synchronized flushing of toilets. I wonder if we could measure this same phenomenon at 12:01 AM EST, November 10.

The following day, Roberta tells me - and believe me, she has a lot to tell me about this - the ISMRM phone rings off the hook with people asking to change the order of authors, add authors, eliminate authors (on the abstract, hopefully not in real life), pleading that if they don't correct a typo they'll lose their job... In my role as AMPC chair I would like to kindly suggest to some of you - and you know who you are - that submitting your abstract just 3 days early would allow you to add some authors the next day, remove authorship of that one person that

annoys you the following day, and then skip work and go fishing, have a spa day, or do whatever it is that you young folks do, on November 9. Doesn't that sound like a better plan?

After about a week of intense work by the central office to clean things up and prepare abstracts to send out, the review process begins. Each of the 6000+ abstracts are reviewed by five volunteers of the society. These folks work hard at this very important job, each reviewing about 40 abstracts (numbers will vary considerably). When Roberta sends out the call for reviewer volunteers, she gets 90% of the required volunteers in 24 hours. Way to go, people, you are a collective rock star.

For every abstract, at least one of the five reviewers is an AMPC member, guaranteeing that there is at least one person at the construction meeting who has read each abstract. This means that AMPC members each review, on average, over 100 abstracts. Shazam. These abstracts then go back to the central office, who furiously (and by that I mean speedily, not angrily) arrange things to be ready for the upcoming Construction Meeting.

The January 2012 Construction Meeting (Madrid)

Here the education planning for the Salt Lake meeting will happen, like I mentioned above. For Melbourne! this is where we will take all your abstracts, look at the scores, and choose who gets talks, who gets posters, and such. It is a really, really fun and busy meeting. I'm going to talk in more detail about how this meeting works in two blogs, one before it happens, and then again afterwards (with pictures!) in a post-Madrid blog. So no more information about that now.



(left) The seals at Cape du Couedic have (right) treacherous waters to contend with. And still, they are not ready for the force of an AMPC construction meeting.

In fact, I think that's all for now. I have ideas for many upcoming blogs, but if there is something you are wondering about - that I could possibly answer here - please email me with your questions (jim.pipe@chw.edu).

Hooroo,

Jim Pipe,
AMPC Chair, 2012 Melbourne



A gratuitous picture meant to leave you with good feelings about this blog.