Celebration of the XIX World Congress
June 22-25, 2007, Bologna

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The city of Bologna, Italy provided a beautiful venue for the XIX World Congress of the ISHR. On the first day, as we made our way to the Congress Centre, we were looking forward to a packed and varied scientific programme; not to mention the chance to explore the ancient city (of which we had seen a tantalising glimpse) and sample the delicious local food. The conference was opened with a talk by David Hearse, the recipient of the 2007 Peter Harris Distinguished Scientist Award, who gave an entertaining and informative summary of his scientific accomplishments in the field of ischaemia/reperfusion. We particularly enjoyed his use of a James Bond clip to illustrate the importance of free radicals! The next session set the tone for the rest of the meeting: with six parallel scientific symposia on a diverse range of topics, providing a wealth of cutting-edge research.
edge science and plenty of choice for everyone. We won’t even attempt to cover all of the talks we attended throughout the meeting, but just mention that the basic science symposia were particularly well attended: there were crowds of people craning their necks to hear the proceedings outside some symposia, including those on p38 and other protein kinases.

Friday evening provided the first real opportunity to see Bologna, and the walk through the city to the stunning church of Santa Lucia allowed us to fully appreciate the arcades which are so characteristic of Bologna. Santa Lucia church provided a fitting backdrop for a lecture from the Nobel Laureate, Louis Ignarro, who gave us a fascinating insight into the discovery of NO as the elusive endothelium derived relaxing factor. Afterwards, the steps and courtyard of Santa Lucia proved a lovely setting for an authentic pasta dinner, which gave delegates an opportunity to sample traditional Italian food in the balmy evening air.

The next morning we awoke bright and early to enjoy a plenary session on the complexity of the heartbeat. We particularly enjoyed the opening talk by Michael Shattock, who introduced the audience to the subject with an excellent educational lecture. Michael Rosen, Peter Schwartz and Jeffrey Borer then gave more focused talks on the subject.

Saturday lunchtime brought a further opportunity to sample more delicious Italian food and the ice cream proved extremely popular. Lunch was served in two large halls where the posters provided an overwhelming array of new scientific data across many areas of cardiovascular research. After lunch, Martin Lohse received the 2007 Research Achievement Award and gave an excellent talk.
Africa and India. Within Europe we really managed to be omni-comprehensive with 27 countries being represented.

The best part for me was the interaction that I was able to see with my own eyes. People were talking in the corridors, congress rooms, lunch halls, exhibition areas, on the steps of Santa Lucia and under the arcades of Bologna. I really believe that the spirit of the ISHR has returned, and I am proud to say that maybe the three Universities involved in the World Congress, Ferrara, Padova and Bologna, contributed to this.

For an Italian, it was also a big satisfaction to see that there was no food left over. On the last day, in fact, we had a little “crisis” with the lasagne! This was resolved by the chef’s enthusiasm. Nobody starved!

Finally, when you organise a meeting such as this, you are also taking a huge economical risk. This was particularly difficult this year in Italy as we had to face some very stringent new laws regarding pharmaceutical sponsorship of meetings. This meant that we obviously lost some funding. Nevertheless, we managed to have a small income, and the ISHR Council has decided to give this back to the Sections which participated in the World Congress by not holding a separate annual meeting.

Also, I am very proud to say that the Bologna World Congress has contributed to a substantial travel fund for the young investigators, enabling them to go to Japan in 2010.

This is my final comment: I could not think of a better continuation than the upcoming World Congress in Kyoto under the leadership of Dr Masatsugu Hori, a great friend.

Ciao a tutti,

Roberto Ferrari
1. President Roberto Ferrari (Ferrara, Italy) greets Eminenza Rev.ma il Sig. Cardinale Carlo Caffarra as he arrives to attend the opening ceremony of the XIXth ISHR World Congress.

2. Co-organizer of the Congress, Luigi Tavazzi, addresses the delegates during the opening ceremony.

3. Bologna “La Grassa” (The Fat) earns its nickname as meeting participants partake of the delicious Italian cheeses, meat, breads and wines in the courtyard of the Santa Lucia prior to the opening ceremony.

4. During the “White Night” closing evening, meeting participants are visiting the Palazzo dell’ Archiginnasio with the 17th century Anatomical Theatre.

5. A rare view of the canals of Bologna. Now covered over by roads, the canal system was built in the 12th century to divert water to the city center from the Reno river west of the city.
Dear Reader,

I am deeply honored to have been appointed President of the ISHR. The ISHR has been an important part of my scientific life for the past 25 years and some of my fondest memories are linked to this Society. I would like to thank Council for the confidence it has placed in me and the ISHR members for their support. I can assure you that I will do my utmost, working as hard as I can to enhance our Society. I would also like to thank my dear friend, Roberto Ferrari, for the great job he has done and the wisdom he has exhibited in leading the Society over the past 3 years. His optimism, cheerfulness, and equanimity in dealing with various issues have been enormously beneficial to the ISHR. I am delighted to continue to work with Metin Avkiran as Secretary General. Over the past 3 years, he has worked tirelessly for the ISHR, with impeccable organization and efficiency (and often without much recognition). Thanks, Metin, for your exemplary service; I know you will continue to be a tremendous asset for the Society. I look forward to working with David Eisner as the new Editor of JMCC and Leslie Anderson Lobaugh as the new Editor of Heart News and Views. I am sure they will both do a superb job.

Our Society has grown considerably since its inception in Dubrovnik 39 years ago. Although we face the challenge of competing with an increasingly large number of organizations, I believe that we have unique strengths and a unique place in the scientific landscape. What are our strengths? We are arguably the only truly international society devoted to basic cardiovascular science. Unlike larger societies, we have a distinctively warm, friendly, and convivial personality. We have already amassed almost $1.5 million, we publish a major cardiovascular journal, we distribute high-profile awards every year and triennially, and we organize meetings in marvelous locations that most societies cannot use. How many organizations do you know that hold meetings in Brisbane, then in Bologna, and then in Kyoto? We have the ability to offer scientists things that many other societies cannot. It would behoove us to capitalize on them.

In this inaugural column I would like to present briefly some general principles that will guide my presidency; in a subsequent issue of HN&V, I will describe in detail a number of specific initiatives that I have proposed to the ISHR Council.

1. Science. The fundamental underpinning of our activities must always be science. Investigators yearn for, and are attracted to, scientific excellence. We must always remember that we are first and foremost a scientific Society; friendship, camaraderie, social considerations take second place. Our decisions (e.g., selection of organizers and speakers for our meetings, winners for our awards, authors for the papers published in JMCC, etc.) must be dictated primarily by scientific excellence. There is no other way to thrive or even survive in the face of the ever-growing proliferation of organizations, meetings, and societies and the resulting increasingly fierce competition.

2. Expansion. Speaking of competition, I see this as the most formidable challenge for our Society. If we are to deal with this issue effectively, we must first acknowledge that our membership has remained stagnant for many years while other societies have grown. The ISHR must expand. Although we have thousands of members worldwide, there are large segments of the cardiovascular scientific community that do not participate in our activities. We need to develop a well-thought out strategy to reach out to them.

3. Competition. Competing with other meetings and societies will require a number of strategies. The key to enhancing our membership is, of course, to emphasize science, as pointed out above. Secondly, we must continually maintain a self-flagellating attitude. We must continually ask ourselves what are we doing wrong and how can we do
PEOPLE kill each other in war, and people kill each other in peace. When the killing happens in peacetime it is called murder. Murders are committed wherever hate runs unchecked; in homes, in the streets, in towns, and in the country. Murder is not supposed to happen in places of higher learning, particularly in a renowned university, but it did happen in 1849 at Harvard University Medical School in Boston Massachusetts, in the United States of America. The incident involved two Harvard faculty members who belonged to the elite of Boston Society. The murdered man, Dr George Parkman, was a physician and former Professor of Anatomy; the convicted murderer was Dr John Webster, Professor of Chemistry. Parkman had given up medicine and had become a wealthy dealer in Real Estate and a moneylender. Webster had four daughters and borrowed money from Parkman, a debt that he had difficulty repaying. He was afflicted with a defect not uncommon in academia: the inability to handle money. Both of these men met one evening in Webster’s department in the medical school, where Parkman went to see him to demand his pound of flesh. In a rage, Webster killed Parkman. A crime involving two Harvard professors was sensational enough, but what made it especially grisly was the way Webster disposed of the victim’s body, cutting it into pieces and hiding it in his laboratory.

There was a third player in this tragedy: the janitor of the building that housed the Harvard Medical School, Ephraim Littlefield. He had been helping Webster in his laboratory the day Parkman disappeared. The red herring in this gruesome story is a turkey, which Webster gave Littlefield as a Thanksgiving present. The turkey is mentioned in several reports of this crime, assuming ominous significance. Despite the gift of the turkey, Littlefield hated Webster. He sneaked into Webster’s lab and eventually discovered parts of Parkman’s body in various places, including the privy. Webster was later hanged for his crime.

The murdered man, Parkman, although universally disliked because of his avarice, had a redeeming background, which made him a tragic figure. As a young physician he became interested in the fate of the mentally ill. These unfortunate people were shackled and kept like wild animals in cages. Parkman went to France to meet Dr Philippe Pinel, who had introduced new and humane ways to treat the mentally ill and rescue them from ignorance and squalor. He used treatment based on rewards and punishment and treated the mentally ill as unfortunate people, not as prisoners. Today Pinel is considered the founder of modern psychiatry. Upon his return, Parkman made plans to become director of an asylum for the mentally ill outside Boston in which the principles of Pinel’s treatment were to be followed, but to his disappointment, he was not chosen. It is not surprising that the murder became an international sensation. When Charles Dickens visited Boston in 1867, he asked to see the room where Parkman was murdered.

Many prominent medical men of that period became involved in the trial for the murder of Professor Parkman. The most prominent was Oliver Wendell Holmes, Professor of Anatomy and Dean of the Medical School who was asked to examine the parts of Parkman’s body. In 1843, Holmes published a paper on the contagiousness of puerperal fever, a landmark contribution to medicine. He also coined the word “anesthesia” after the use of ether during surgery had been established.

Also involved was Dr William Y.G. Morton, a dentist who was asked to testify during Webster’s trial on the identity of recovered teeth. Morton became one of the most controversial figures in American medicine. He introduced ether anesthesia into surgery, but his claim for priority was disputed. Recently, a book on Morton was published called “Tarnished Idol”, tarnished, because to quote: “He (Morton) was an unpolished, poorly educated man with little scientific knowledge and possessed of an unscrupulous character, indeed perhaps even a criminal mind.” The authors’ conclusions are unjustified. His detractors also charged him with all sorts of meanness, and Charles Thomas Jackson, a physician, claimed priority because he had discussed the use of ether with Morton during a sea voyage. However, the fact remains that Morton used ether for the first time on a patient at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Why all the vindictiveness against Morton? Jealousy is common in science, where there are few sudden revelations, but rather a gradual ripening of ideas. Final credit must go to those who made the new idea a working reality, and it was Morton who accomplished it.

As the story of the murder fades into history, there remains a comment of a Bostonian housewife, “What do you expect from a Harvard man?”

References
Fisher J. The Official Website of Jim Fisher on Forensic Science: <jimfisher.edinboro.edu/forensics/webster1.html>

(continued on page 7)
it better. We must incessantly strive to improve our programs, our meetings, our journal, our awards, and all of the other things we do. Third, we need to enhance our profile in the scientific community. It pains me to note that blank stare in the eyes of some people who ask me “which society?” when I mention the ISHR. We have many strengths (vide supra) but they are a well-kept secret. We need to do a better job of spreading the word about what we do and the things that we can offer to our constituency.

4. Unity. Above all, we must remember that we are one Society, not seven different Sections. We must all work together to advance the frontiers of human knowledge. I fervently hope we will continue to operate in the spirit that we have seen in Bologna this year, with the Sections holding their meetings in conjunction with the World Congress.

I believe the ISHR can and will grow, and it will continue to fulfill a unique and important role in the scientific community. I look forward to working with you over the next three years. Please send me any comments or suggestions at rbolli@louisville.edu.

Roberto Bolli

**ISHR Council 2007-2010**

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Richard J. Bing, M.D.
The focus of the XXVII ISHR European Section Meeting was ischaemic injury and cardioprotection. The chosen venue for the meeting was Provincia di Padova, a province in the Veneto region of Italy. The opening ceremony and main symposia were held in Padova (Padua) and Abano Terme respectively. Padua is the oldest city in Northern Italy, steeped in university tradition and home of many scientific discoveries. It was here that William Harvey studied and was stimulated by the anatomist Fabricius, eventually culminating in his own research on the circulation of blood many years later. Thus, Padua was an ideal venue for the opening of the XXVII ISHR European Section meeting.

Università degli Studi di Padova (University of Padua) was founded in 1222 and was a cutting edge university, being one of the first to exemplify the idea of a Gymnasium Omnium Disciplinarum (large variety of curricula), an educational model that can now be seen throughout the world. Originally, the courses offered were limited to jurisprudence and theology, but these were soon joined by medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and rhetoric. The University of Padua has built its prestigious reputation on many of its famous scholars, including Andreas Vesalius, Antonio Vallisneri and Hieronymus Fabricius. Galileo Galilei also taught there between 1591 and 1610. It was also the first university with an anatomy theatre, dating back to 1594, making it the centre for some of the most important anatomical discoveries. The entire university was centred around the Hospitium Bovis (the Inn at the Sign of the Ox), which still gives its name to the historic main building of the university, the Palazzo del Bo, where the ISHR European members were privileged to attend the opening ceremony. The walls were adorned with plaques displaying the names of distinguished alumni, including William Harvey, which was a strong reminder of the extended history of the university. After a brief introduction to “Padova in the History of Cardiology” by Professor Gaetano Thiene, an insightful keynote lecture on “Protection of the Ischaemic Heart” was delivered by Professor Derek Yellon, who described the reperfusion injury salvage kinase (RISK) pathway and reduction in post-ischaemic protection in the diabetic myocardium. This was followed by a highly entertaining talk by Roberto Ferrari about the double life of Professor Tom Ruigrok, who was honoured as the recipient of the 2007 ISHR European Section Medal of Merit.
The opening ceremony ended with a welcome reception, providing an insight into the Italians’ obsession with food and drink, where we sampled pizza, pasta and prosecco. It was only polite to continue the evening by sampling the infamous Aperol (orange liquor, served with gin) and Peroni (a true continental lager) in several local bars before returning to Abano Terme, where the remainder of the meeting was held and where our hotel was situated.

On arrival at Abano Terme train station, one may be forgiven for thinking this was a “ghost town,” with the deserted station situated at the end of a quiet road and only a small sign with a number to ring for a taxi. However, once in the centre of the town, there was slightly more life! Abano is situated in the slopes of the volcanic Euganean Hills. The mainstay of Abano Terme’s economy is its medicinal hot springs and mud baths, and as a result the town attracts a more mature crowd. The congress centre, “Pietro d’Abano,” situated in the centre of the town, was the venue for the scientific symposia. There was an exciting choice of symposia on offer in three parallel sessions over one and a half days, highlighting the diversity and complexity of ischaemic injury and cardioprotection from basic science to clinical application. It was often very difficult to decide which symposia to forfeit in favour of another. A few of the many highlights from the programme include Yasser Abdallah’s insightful overview of PKG and cytosolic calcium regulation, Andrew Halestrap’s informative insight into the mitochondrial permeability transition pore (MPTP) in myocardial injury and survival, and Michael Cohen’s overview of the signal transduction pathways in post-conditioning. Moreover, Robert Bell gave a highly narrative and informative review on redox signalling and cardioprotection.

The winner of the ISHR-Servier Research Fellowship was Dr Marta Roccio, from the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands. The Fellowship will fund her work on “Molecular mechanisms of cardiac progenitor cells differentiation.” The previous winner, Dr Derek Hausenloy, presented a report on his work focusing on the role of MPTP in myocardial reperfusion injury. The meeting concluded with a traditional Italian lunch before we boarded a coach for the 2 hour transfer to Bologna for the XIX World Congress of the ISHR.

Overall, despite being relatively short, the meeting covered many interesting areas of ischaemic injury and cardioprotection, and generated much debate and friendly discussion. Extended thanks should go to the organisers Fabio Di Lisa, Sabino Iliceto, Stefano Schiaffino and Gaetano Thiene for organising a very successful and informative meeting, bearing the best hallmarks of ISHR meetings: good science and warm hospitality.

David Elsey, BSc MSc and Dwaine Burley, BSc
Cardiff University, Wales
The XXIV annual meeting of the ISHR Japanese Section was held in Ferrara, Italy, on June 21, 2007, as one of the satellite meetings of the ISHR World Congress held in Bologna. The meeting was organized by Prof. Issei Komuro (Chiba University), and the conference venue was the Castello Estense di Ferrara, a picturesque castle in the center of the city. The meeting was well attended, and the quality of the science was outstanding.

The ISHR Japanese Section meeting this year was unusual in that it was held for the first time outside of Japan as one of the satellite meetings of the XIX World Congress of the ISHR in Bologna. The city of Ferrara is situated about 40 km northeast of Bologna, and was included in 1995 by UNESCO in the list of World Heritage Sites as an intact Renaissance town. The Castello Estense (the Estense Castle), the conference venue, is a four-towered moated castle of the Este family, and was built beginning in 1385 (see photo at the top of this page).

The meeting started at 8:30 am with an oral session, followed by a Young Investigator’s Award competition, a luncheon seminar, a symposium, and an evening seminar. There were six finalists for the Young Investigator’s Award competition, and Dr Motoaki Sano (Keio University) and Dr Kazutaka Ueda (Chiba University) won the first prize. In a luncheon seminar, Dr Hiroshi Ito (Akita University) gave a lecture entitled “Chronic heart failure-molecular mechanisms and new drug therapy”. The symposium on ‘Cardiac Regeneration’ was chaired by Dr Issei Komuro (Chiba University) and Dr Mark Mercola (Burnham Institute) (see photo at the bottom of this page), and five invited speakers discussed various aspects of heart regeneration from basic science to clinical application. Dr Hiroaki Matsubara (Kyoto Prefectural University) presented data regarding cardiogenic stem cells derived from human heart biopsy samples, Dr Mark Mercola talked about the screening of small molecules that regulate embryonic stem cell differentiation into cardiomyocytes, Dr Toshio Nagai (Chiba University) discussed the potential use of cardiac Sca-1-positive and side-population (SP) cells for heart regeneration, Dr Marco Valgimigli (University of Ferrara) discussed the outcomes of G-CSF clinical trials for acute myocardial infarction, and Dr Keiichi Fukuda (Keio University) talked about the role for cardiac neural crest cells in myocardial regeneration. The final session of the meeting was an evening seminar by Dr Masafumi Kitakaze (National Cardiovascular Center), who gave us a lecture entitled “Comprehensive approaches to find new pathophysiology or effective treatment of chronic heart failure from genomic and clinical database”. There was also a poster session in

Dr Issei Komuro and Dr Mark Mercola chairing the symposium. (continued on page 12)
The Bologna Career Development Workshop
The Heart of the Matter - A Career in Cardiovascular Research

The Bologna World Congress Career Development Workshop had a relatively humble origin in the Southern Antipodes. At the Australasian Section Meeting in Canberra in 2006, Iwan Williams and I (PhD students) hosted a career development workshop. The workshop was informal and was designed to promote a high level of interaction between the speakers and students. We were delighted to be joined by Professor Eric Olson, Dr Julie McMullen and Dr Jason Peart. Each speaker imparted valuable career advice making the event a highlight of the meeting for the students. At the official conference dinner, and still excited by the success of the workshop, the proposition was put to Professor Ferrari that we might host a similar workshop at the World Congress in Bologna - to our delight the idea was warmly welcomed.

In consultation with Professor Ferrari, Iwan and I began planning the inaugural World Congress Career Development Workshop. Building on the theme from the Heart News and Views autobiographical series, we titled the workshop “The Heart of the Matter: A Career in Cardiovascular Research”. After the success of the workshop in Canberra a similar structure was planned for Bologna. The goal of this initiative was to provide an opportunity for the global ISHR student members to congregate and network, and to provide an interactive forum for students to learn from the experiences of senior career scientists and clinicians to assist the planning of their own research career.

The task of selecting speakers for the workshop was challenging. Narrowing the selection to only four was difficult with so many worthy speakers attending the Bologna meeting. Diversity was identified as an important feature in order to make the workshop relevant to as many students as possible; thus we sought speakers from the different ISHR Sections. The final programme was World Class and this was acknowledged by the large audience who elected to forgo lunch to fill Hall Rossa at the Palazzo dei Congressi. We were privileged to hear from four talented scientists from around the globe: Professors Lionel Opie (South Africa), Tom Ruigrok (The Netherlands), Lea Delbridge (Australia) and Joanne Ingwall (USA).

With each speaker at a different stage in their career journey, a wide range of topics were covered. We heard how Professor Opie developed a successful career pursuing one main hypothesis. Professor Ruigrok gave a historical account of the ISHR and emphasised how these meetings provide invaluable networking opportunities. Professor Delbridge addressed the challenge of balancing work and family life and the workshop concluded with some sound advice from Professor Ingwall on the importance of selecting a mentor. Practical tips were also forthcoming and we learned that a lesson in PowerPoint is the key to a good talk (thanks Professor Opie!) and a commute to work of < 6 minutes assists ‘work and family balance’ (cheers Professor Delbridge!). Whilst no two people will share an identical career path it is energizing and useful to hear the successes of others and the road they took to get to their current positions.

For post-grad students the opportunity to plan and chair a workshop at the World Congress was a rare and valuable experience.

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Japanese Section Meeting (continued from page 10)

which 19 investigators presented their data, and two were selected for Poster Awards: Dr Tadashi Kuroda (Osaka University) and Dr Atai Watanabe (Gunma University). After the meeting, there was a reception at La Provvidenza, an Italian restaurant near the castle (see photo on the right). Overall the attendees enjoyed the science of the meeting and the atmosphere of the city of Ferrara.

On behalf of the organizing committee of the XXIV ISHR Japanese Section meeting, we would like to thank Prof. Roberto Ferrari (University of Ferrara), who gave us the opportunity to organize the Japanese Section meeting in a beautiful Renaissance city, and all the participants who joined the meeting.

Ichiro Shiojima, MD PhD and Hiroshi Akazawa, MD PhD
Chiba University
Chiba, Japan

Career Development Workshop (continued from page 11)

experience. Together with Spring Farrell, a Canadian student from the North American Section recruited to assist, we had a very affirming experience as chairs-in-training. Overall, the positive reception of this initiative from both the students and the speakers was very encouraging. We are delighted with the news from the ISHR Council, that our initiative is to be adopted as a standing event at future World Congresses – students of every Section should be ready to be involved. But don’t just wait for the next World Congress – We strongly encourage all students to consider holding a similar event at their local annual Section meetings.

Iwan Williams and Kate Huggins
Australasian Section

NEWLY APPOINTED FELLOWS OF THE ISHR

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At the reception (from left to right): Dr Tohru Izumi (chairman of the 25th ISHR Japanese Section meeting, 2008), Dr Issei Komuro (chairman of the 24th ISHR Japanese Section meeting, 2007), Dr Masatsugu Hori (Section President), Dr Masayasu Hiraoka (Former Section President), and Dr Haruaki Nakaya (chairman of the 23rd ISHR Japanese Section meeting, 2006).

Career Development symposium organizers (from left), Iwan Williams (Sydney, Australia), Catherine Huggins (Melbourne, Australia) and Spring Farrell (Halifax, Nova Scotia).
REPORT ON THE XXIX ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SECTION
(JUNE 21-22, 2007; BOLOGNA, ITALY)

After a long journey across the Atlantic Ocean, numerous attendees of the North American Section meeting finally arrived in Bologna. Vast sights of red tiles and spots of patina marked our views of the city from the airplane. A cultural hot spot and once among the largest cities in the Middle Ages, Bologna is packed with more than two millennia of well preserved history, making it Europe’s second largest historic centre and visibly sparking excitement in the eyes of every visitor.

The entrance to the imposing Santa Lucia, venue for the opening ceremony of the XXIX ISHR North American Section meeting.

The walk to the conference site in the inner city involved navigating a maze of narrow streets without apparent order, but with unexpected beauty. Elegant and extensive arcades, along with medieval, renaissance, and baroque monuments and churches, lined the migration path of researchers to the Aula Magna Santa Lucia, location of the lectures. Among the churches, the impressive basilica of San Petronio is obviously one of the largest in the world. Surprisingly, the meeting venue, Santa Lucia, is also an ancient church. High cupolas, gracious columns and precious artifacts frame the speaker’s podium. There, Dr. Richard Moss warmly welcomed the attendees to this unique place, giving the introduction to this high profile meeting. He was followed by Dr. William B. Weglicki, who delivered the North American Section President’s Lecture on his intriguing work in unraveling the effects of magnesium deficiency in cardiovascular inflammation. In a very interesting talk, he showed results which suggest that young adults with a higher intake of magnesium have a lower risk of developing the metabolic syndrome. Also interesting was the role of free radicals in magnesium deficiency induced cardiomyopathy.

The lunch breaks offered clues to the culinary wonders of the city. The cuisine in Bologna is world renowned for prosciutto, home-made tortellini and the delicious Bolognese sauce. The breaks also offered time for exploration of the conference site. Santa Lucia is actually part of the University of Bologna, which was founded in 1088 and is the oldest existing university in Europe. Having grown over the centuries, the University is spread across the city. Past students include Pope Nicholas V, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Copernicus. Later in the week, the university opened its doors exclusively for the ISHR attendees to visit spectacular historic sites during the “White Closing Night”, an event that was the social highlight of the World Congress. Among the sites was the Ana–
tomical Theater in the Palazzo dell’ Archiginnasio built in 1563, an amphitheater where anatomical lectures were held by famous physicians, including Marcello Malpighi and Luigi Galvani, who discovered that muscle contraction is caused by electricity.

One highlight of the meeting was the highly competitive Young Investigator Award. The event was well attended and all five speakers gave fascinating and excellent talks. The winner of the award, Dr Eva van Rooij from Dr Eric Olson’s group, presented her work on the microRNA regulation of heart disease. These young investigators all showed that the future for the ISHR is a bright one.

On the first evening, we had a superb dinner in the restaurant Cantina Benvoglio, named after the family who ruled the flourishing city in the 15th century. Delicious entrees followed the traditional appetizer, prosciutto with melon, providing an excellent environment to socialize with ISHR members. At the dinner, North American Section President, Rick Moss, heartily thanked the meeting organizers and welcomed the meeting participants, and Donald Bers, President-Elect and Chairman of the Young Investigator Award committee, introduced the finalists and presented the award to Dr van Rooij.

Altogether, the two days of the meeting comprised numerous interesting and exciting scientific sessions, including captivating presentations by Drs Kirk Hammond on adenylyl cyclase gene transfer in heart failure, John Solaro on cardiac Z-disc proteins as centers for kinase/phosphatase signaling in the heart, and James Weiss on intracellular Ca²⁺ and membrane ion channel clock interaction in arrhythmias. Jeffery D. Molkentin chaired a particularly stimulating session which focused on signaling pathways that might protect the failing myocardium. Drs Cam Patterson, Saul Powell and Peipei Ping presented novel and fundamental data in a relatively young field in cardiovascular research, which has increasingly gained attention within the last few years and is considered a hot topic: the ubiquitin-proteasome system in the myocardium and its implications in cardiac diseases.

This year’s meeting can hardly be described without mentioning the subsequent international ISHR World Congress, which continued with an outstanding program. Several presentations deserve special notice, including those by Drs David J. Hearse (Peter Harris Distinguished Scientist Award) on the successes and failures in the journey from laboratory to man with respect to ischemia, reperfusion and cardioprotection, Louis J. Ignarro (Nobel Laureate Lecture), Martin J. Lohse (Research Achievement Award), Eric
Olson (Landmark Scientific Lecture), and Eduardo Marbán (Keith Reimer Distinguished Lecture). Certain sessions were particularly well attended, resulting in rooms packed to capacity with scientists sitting on the floor and standing in the back. Those sessions included: NADPH oxidases in cardiovascular signaling and disease, Cardiac protein oxidation: from damage to redox signaling, and Spatial organization of signaling pathways in cardiac myocytes. Finally, Nobel laureate (Chemistry, 2004) Dr Aaron Ciechanover gave a visionary closing lecture on the importance of the ubiquitin-proteasome system in human diseases.

All in all, both meetings presented a successful combination of remarkable scientific content, cultural appeal and opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with fellow researchers. Thus, this year’s meetings particularly inspired us to look forward to the 2008 Section meeting in Cincinnati and the 2010 World Congress in Kyoto.

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