

The 40th Anniversary of ARO

In celebrating the 40th year anniversary in 2013, the ARO is planning to have a short ceremony, right after the Award of Merit presentation, and will recognize those who have attended all 36 MidWinter Meetings followed by a Reception and Slide Show of yesteryears of fond memories of the MidWinter Meetings.

Early History of ARO

ARO was formed from the Research Committee Meeting of the AAOO (American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology). Harold Schuknecht (Harvard Medical School and Mass Eye and Ear Hospital), Juergen Tonndorf (Columbia University), and David Lim (Ohio State University) formally proposed to establish the new research society from the Research Committee Meeting. After a long debate among those who attended the 1973 Research Committee Meeting, it was then decided to establish the new research society. Paul Ward (the Chair of the Research Committee) was empowered to appoint a nominating committee to come up with officers of the Research Society. Bob Butler (as chair), Bob Kohut, and Bill Melnick were members of the nominating committee and they recommended the slate of officers. At the first annual meeting in 1974, David Hilding (Yale University) was elected as President and Harold Schuknecht, Juergen Tonndorf, Vicente Honrubia, James Snow, and David Lim as members of the Executive Council. The first by-laws were drafted by the By-Laws Committee (Harold Schuknecht as chair, and Juergen Tonndorf, and Anderson Hilding as members). The ARO by-laws were approved at the 1974 annual meeting and ARO was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1974. ARO replaced the Research Committee Meeting and continued to meet with the AAOO meeting in Chicago. The record indicates that there were 180 charter members who attended the first Business Meeting.



Co-Founders: Tonndorf, Schuknecht, Lim

ARO MidWinter Meeting:

ARO decided to have its MidWinter Meeting separate from the AAOO meeting on a trial basis since we were not sure if taking an uncharted path would be successful. The first MidWinter Meeting took place in 1978 at the Happy Dolphin Inn in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida with a very happy outcome and ARO prospered and outgrew the Happy Dolphin Inn. The MidWinter Meeting redefined the ARO from this point on.



Happy Dolphin Inn St Pete Beach



Tradewinds Resort St Pete Beach

Over the years, ARO met at different meeting venues including the Happy Dolphin Inn (1978-1984), Clearwater Beach Holiday Inn (1985-1988), Tradewinds Resort at St Pete Beach (1989-2001), Adams Mark Hotel at Daytona Beach (2003-2004), Fairmont Hotel at New Orleans (2005), Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel at Baltimore (2006, 2009, 2011, 2013), Hyatt Regency Hotel Denver (2007), Wyndham Phoenix Hotel in Arizona (2008), Disneyland Hotel at Anaheim, California (2010), and the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel San Diego (2012). Among all the hotels where we've held the MidWinter Meetings, the Happy Dolphin Inn and the Tradewinds Resort at St. Pete Beach stand out as our most favorite meeting locations with many fond memories. As the ARO scientific meeting grew in size and complexity, finding beach-side hotels that could accommodate the ARO MidWinter Meeting was beyond our fiscal capabilities. Thus, ARO decided to have the MidWinter Meeting site alternate between the East coast and West coast. The hope was that attendance at the MidWinter Meeting would be dictated by the quality of the scientific presentations rather than the meeting locations. The MidWinter Meeting attendance has fluctuated between 1,400 and 1,600. The lowest meeting attendance occurred at the Denver meeting in 2007. Meeting attendance has stabilized around 1,600, and is now considered the "must" meeting to attend with those in the field of basic and clinical auditory neurosciences. It is remarkable that Prof. Tonomori Takaska from Sendai University brought an average of 20 members from his department for many years. I believe that his effort contributed to popularizing ARO in Japan as attested by the high number of Japanese members.

ARO Membership:

ARO membership fluctuates between 1,700 and 2,000 representing 35 countries. The largest membership, besides the U.S., is Japan then followed by the United Kingdom and Germany. In the past, members from overseas were not considered for officer positions. The International Committee campaigned to make changes and Karen Avraham was the first overseas member to serve as President. ARO also established a Student organization, spARO, and their members also participate in the governance of the ARO.

ARO Award of Merit:

ARO has awarded a total of 38 Awards of Merit to distinguished scientists in recognition of their scientific contributions. It is considered a high honor to receive this competitive award. [Click here](#) to view the full list of Award of Merit recipients.

Journal of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology (JARO):

One of the accomplishments of the ARO is the establishment of its own journal known as JARO. It was largely the effort of Gerry Popelka and Art Popper. Eric Young was selected as the Editor-in-Chief and the first issue came out in March 2004. JARO has become one of the most important scientific journals in the field.

Other Accomplishments:

Among many accomplishments, ARO developed an extensive Travel Award program bringing in many students and young trainees to attend the ARO MidWinter Meeting. ARO continues to explore ways to serve its members and promote the organization.

Submitted by David Lim, MD