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Authors

Sandman, Curt A

Miller, Lyle H

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Introduction

The Third Annual Winter Neuropeptide Conference was held in Breckenridge, Colorado, January 20–23, 1982. The previous two Winter Neuropeptide Conferences were held in Copper Mountain (1980) and Breckenridge (1981). These three meetings were satellites of the oldest active neuroscience conference, The Winter Conference on Brain Research. However, the initial impetus for the Winter Neuropeptide Conference was the Bicentennial Neuropeptide Conference held in Philadelphia in 1976. During this meeting, interest was expressed by those who attended the meeting and those who read the proceedings, that an annual meeting be developed.

The intention of the Bicentennial Conference was to bring together scientists working actively in the area of Neuropeptides with scientists who had made a significant theoretical impact in related fields. The goal was to encourage scientists from established disciplines to shape a view of the role of research with neuropeptides within a larger context. We believed that work with neuropeptides, even in the earliest stage, represented a significant increment in the movement toward understanding dynamic factors in brain and their effects on behavior. Certainly, the contention that behavior could be controlled with administration of peptide challenged the predominant view that the structures of brain were solely responsible for the behavior of organisms. It should be remembered that the 1976 conference was well under development before the endorphins had their enormous impact on the field. At this time most of the scientists working with peptides were either endocrinologists or behavioral pharmacologists. Since the discovery of the endorphins, a large number of scientists from divergent disciplines have enrolled their efforts in the study of the neuropeptides.

By 1980 the field had changed radically. Our First Winter Neuropeptide Conference reflected this change, although we did not preserve the record of that conference. Significant findings, both clinical and theoretical, now could be identified with the field of neuropeptides. Consequently, our conference included topics related to mechanisms of action and

the putative role of precursors and enzymes in peptide action. Further, there was active discussion of the potential of neuropeptides as clinical tools. Thus, in the span of only four years, very significant changes had occurred in the field of neuropeptides. The 1981 conference was a conventional meeting with most of the papers firmly grounded in data and published in Volume 2, Supplement 1, of *Peptides*.

The past conference, the Third Annual Winter Neuropeptide Conference, was evidence of a maturing organization. An Executive Committee was established which included the initiation of a rotating program committee. For the past conference, Tom O'Donohue served as Program Chairperson and the emphasis of the meeting was decidedly biochemical. Excellent papers (many appearing in this volume) focusing on the biochemical mechanisms and the role of enzymes in peptide action were presented. The Fourth Annual Winter Neuropeptide Conference is scheduled for January 19–22, 1983, in Breckenridge, Colorado with Bob Brush as the Program Chairperson.

We are grateful to Sue Daley and Edie Carey of Colorado Mountain College, the Breckenridge Ski Association, Stan Cope of Beaver Run, Mary LeMond of the University of California, Irvine and Sue Radio of Boston University for their tireless efforts to ensure a successful conference. The indefatigable energy of the program Chairperson, Tom O'Donohue, was an important factor in the execution of this conference. The extraordinary efforts of Gail Handelman in organizing the banquet is gratefully acknowledged. We are indebted to Abba Kastin, Editor-in-Chief, *Peptides*, and his editorial staff for providing this Journal as a forum for communication of the papers presented. We are confident that the conference will continue to reflect and direct the dynamic growth of the field of neuropeptides.

Curt A. Sandman
and
Lyle H. Miller