



# NEWS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Meetings with NIH Officials Provide Us with Valuable Insights



John M. Vierling, MD

Recently, I traveled to Washington, D.C. for three major AASLD activities. The first was a full day of meetings with top officials of NIH institutes. This is the third year of these valuable meetings, which has provided us with a forum to better understand each institute's priorities, their current liver portfolio, and the potential to enhance liver-related research while sharing useful information about AASLD and its many academic members.

Drs. Greg Gores (President-elect), Gyongyi Szabo (chair of the basic research committee), Mr. Lyle Dennis (head of AASLD's Washington office), Ms. Sherrie Cathcart (AASLD executive director), and I met with the leadership of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), the National Institute of Alcohol

(See **PRESIDENT**, p. 9)

### Ethics Committee Develops Policy for Accepting External Funds in Support of AASLD

AASLD accepts external funds, such as charitable contributions, grants, and sponsorships, in support of activities that meet the mission of the Association. For the past several years, one of AASLD's major sources of external funding has been industry. Out of concern that AASLD membership and leadership may perceive this support as an area for potential conflict of interest, the AASLD ethics committee was requested to provide a written policy that offers guidelines for the negotiation and acceptance of external funds to support AASLD's mission.

While the full policy is available for viewing on the AASLD Web site, highlights of this new policy include the following principles:

- Internal funds are considered revenues from dues, meeting and course registrations, serial publications, sales of products and services, return on financial investments, and donations from individuals.
- External funds are offered to AASLD as either unrestricted grants, which support AASLD educational programs, or restricted pass-through funds which support the training of fellows and career development/research awards.

- AASLD may accept external funds for projects that are consistent with its mission, meet an educational need unmet by limitations in internal funding, are well suited to be conducted by AASLD, and are free of commercial bias.
  - External funds that are used to support the administrative operations of
- (See **EXTERNAL FUNDS**, p. 8)

### AASLD Annual Business Meeting Set for Boston

The AASLD Annual Business Meeting will be held October 31, 2006, 10:00-11:00 am in Boston. The agenda will include the affirmation of officers, new Governing Board members, and nominating committee members elected in the fall election. Reports will also be presented by the secretary, treasurer, and the chair of the finance committee. Retiring Board members, committee chairs, and the editor of HEPATOLOGY will be recognized.

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Carla Viscomi

THE 57<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES

# The Liver Meeting<sup>®</sup> 2006

Plan now  
to be in

**Boston**  
October 27-31, 2006.

October 27-31, 2006

John B. Hynes

Veterans Memorial

Convention Center

## Career Development Workshop

Friday, October 27 • Noon – 4:15 pm

Course Directors: *Stephen A. Harrison, MD*  
*Arie Regev, MD*

## Postgraduate Course

**Liver Diseases: Mechanisms of Liver Injury and Emerging Therapies**

Friday, October 27 • 4:00 – 8:00 pm

Saturday, October 28 • 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Course Directors: *Gregory J. Gores, MD*  
*Shelly Lu, MD*

## Research Workshop

**Pathogen Recognition Receptors in Liver Disease**

Sunday, October 29 • 8:00 am – Noon

Course Directors: *Gyongyi Szabo, MD, PhD*  
*Stanley M. Lemon, MD*

## Hepatology Associates Course

Sunday, October 29 • 8:00 am – 2:45 pm

Course Directors: *Marian Kerbleski, RN, BSN*  
*Donna Zucker, RN, PhD*

## General Hepatology Update

Sunday, October 29 • 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Moderators: *Jacquelyn Maher, MD*  
*Andrea Reid, MD*

## NIH Corner

**Liver Disease Associated with HCV and HIV Infections in Drug Abusers**

Sunday, October 29 • 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Course Directors: *Jag Khalsa, PhD*  
*Gyongyi Szabo, MD, PhD*

Join more than 6,000 hepatologists and hepatology professionals from around the world by attending the 57th Annual Meeting & Postgraduate Course of the AASLD—The Liver Meeting<sup>®</sup>—where the cutting edge in the study and treatment of liver and biliary disease is defined.

Numerous workshops, plenary and parallel sessions, poster presentations, scientific exhibits, state-of-the-art lectures given by leading scientists in their field, focused study groups, and the Postgraduate Course will be offered.

## Focused Study Group

**Nuclear Receptors and Liver: Integration of Biology and Pharmacology in the Discovery of New Therapeutic Targets for Liver Disease**

Monday, October 30 • 7:00 – 10:00 pm

Moderators: *Saul J. Karpen, MD, PhD*  
*Michael Trauner, MD*

## Focused Study Group

**The Chasm Between Clinical Trials and Clinical Practice: The Case of Hepatocellular Carcinoma**

Monday, October 30 • 7:00 – 10:00 pm

Moderator: *Hashem B. El-Serag, MD*

## Focused Study Group

**Hepatotoxicity Associated with Anti-retroviral Therapy**

Monday, October 30 • 7:00 am-10:00 pm

Moderators: *Timothy J. Davern, MD*  
*Marion G. Peters, MD*

## AASLD/ASGE Endoscopy Course

**Endoscopy and Hepatology: Challenges and Future Directions**

Friday, October 27 • 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Course Directors: *Paul J. Thuluvath, MD*  
*Hugo E. Vargas, MD*

## AASLD/ILTS Transplant Course

**Liver Transplantation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Clinical Pathologic and Radiologic Correlation in Liver Transplantation**

Friday, October 27 • 7:55 am – 3:30 pm

Course Directors: *Russell H. Wiesner, MD*  
*Michael F. Sorrell, MD*  
*William J. Wall, MD*

## AASLD/NASPGHAN Pediatric Symposium

**Advances in Genetic Metabolic Liver Diseases: From Bench to Bedside**

Friday, October 27 • Noon – 3:00 pm

Course Directors: *Michael R. Narkewicz, MD*  
*Karen F. Murray, MD*

*Dates and times of courses subject to change to adequately accommodate programming.*

**For information on The Liver Meeting<sup>®</sup> go to [www.aasld.org](http://www.aasld.org) and click on The Liver Meeting<sup>®</sup> or call 703-299-9766. Registration opens in late summer 2006.**

# AASLD Leadership Elections and Bylaws Revisions

Election Period: September 18–October 6, 2006

Online and Paper Ballots Available

**A**ASLD Regular and Emeritus members are asked to vote for one councilor-at-large and three members of the 2007 nominating committee, as well as to approve revisions to the bylaws. You may vote using a paper ballot or electronically via fax, email, or online through the AASLD Web site. Ballots will be available September 18–October 6, 2006.

Votes must be received by Friday, October 6 to be counted. Paper ballots should be returned to AASLD Official Ballot, 1729 King Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, or via fax to 703-299-9622. Email submissions may be sent to [aasld@aasld.org](mailto:aasld@aasld.org), and the subject of the message should read "AASLD Official Ballot." Instructions for online voting will be available in the Member Center at [AASLD.org](http://AASLD.org) from September 18–October 6, 2006. Please vote only once using one of the methods mentioned.

## Election of Councilor-at-Large

The councilor-at-large will serve a three-year term on the AASLD Governing Board beginning January 2007 and concluding December 2009. The 2006 nominating committee presents the following slate of candidates for councilor-at-large:

Michael A. Choti, MD, MBA  
Douglas W. Hanto, MD, PhD  
J. Michael Millis, MD

## Election of the 2007 Nominating Committee

The nominating committee will serve a one-year term beginning in January 2007. The three members receiving the most votes will be asked to serve. The 2006 nominating committee presents the following slate of candidates for the 2007 nominating committee:

Michael R. Charlton, MD  
Gregory T. Everson, MD  
Ira M. Jacobson, MD  
Lennox Jeffers, MD, FACP  
Lopa Mishra, MD  
Adrian Reuben, MBBS, FRCP  
Eve A. Roberts, MD, FRCPC  
Philip Rosenthal, MD  
David L. Thomas, MD  
Zobair M. Younossi, MD, MPH

## Bylaw Changes

- It is proposed that a vacancy of the chair position on the nominating

committee shall be filled for the balance of the term by Presidential appointment subject to the approval of the Governing Board.

- It is proposed that an Officer or other member of the Governing Board may not continue to serve upon acceptance of a leadership position with a related organization or employment in the pharmaceutical or biotech industries; nor may committee chairs or voting committee members be appointed or continue to serve on committees upon acceptance of such employment. ■

## Hepatic Fibrosis Conference a Big Hit



*The Henry M. & Lillian Stratton Basic Research single topic conference, Hepatic Fibrosis, was held June 9-11, 2006, at the Arlie Conference Center in Warrenton, Virginia. With course directors Scott L. Friedman, MD; Don C. Rockey, MD; and D. Montgomery Bissell, MD, participants explored how basic biology has led to novel approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of fibrosis and also shared ideas and unpublished data on current research in the field.*

## TRANSPLANT HEPATOLOGY

# CAQ\* Review Course

SEPTEMBER 16-17, 2006 :: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

**B**e prepared to take the first American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Transplant Hepatology Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) Exam by attending the AASLD Transplant Hepatology CAQ Review Course September 16-17, 2006, in Chicago, Illinois. The individual who participates in this comprehensive, up-to-date review course will be better prepared to take the exam as well as manage patients prior to and after liver transplantation. A pediatric track is being offered to support pediatricians taking the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) exam.

### Goals and Objectives

- :: Review state of the art information on the management of patients with end-stage liver disease awaiting liver transplantation.
- :: Review state of the art information on the immediate and long-term management of patients undergoing liver transplantation.
- :: Review the current organ allocation policy and its implications for selecting potential liver transplant recipients.

The CAQ Review Course is co-sponsored by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD), the American Society of Transplantation (AST), the International Liver Transplantation Society (ILTS), and the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN).

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES



### Registration for CAQ Exam

The first ABIM Transplant Hepatology Certificate of Added Qualification Exam is scheduled for November 17, 2006. Register for the exam through the ABIM Web site at [www.abim.org/cert/aqthep.shtm](http://www.abim.org/cert/aqthep.shtm). Pediatricians must register for the exam through the ABP Web site at [www.abp.org](http://www.abp.org), via the "Certification" portal.

For more information about the review course, go to [www.aasld.org](http://www.aasld.org) or contact AASLD at 703-299-9766, fax 703-299-9622, or [aasld@aasld.org](mailto:aasld@aasld.org).

\*Certificate of Added Qualification

### Course Organizers



Gregory J. Gores, MD



Hugo R. Rosen, MD



Ronald J. Sokol, MD

# Future Meetings of Related Societies

**The 13th International Symposium on HCV and Related Viruses** will be held at the Cairns Convention Centre in Queensland, Australia August 27–September 1, 2006.  
**Further information:** <http://www.icms.com.au/hepatitis2006>.

**The 13th International Symposium on Cells of the Hepatic Sinusoid** will be held September 3–6, 2006, at Yujin Memorial Hall, in Niigata, Japan.  
**Further information:** <http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/user/ischs13/>.

**The 24th Biannual IASL Meeting** will be held in cooperation with the African Association for the Study of Liver Diseases September 7–11, 2006, in Cairo, Egypt.  
**Further information:** <http://www.iasl2006.org>.

**The 17th Annual Gastrointestinal Surgical Pathology Course: Endoscopic Biopsies of the GI Tract** will be held September 11–12, 2006, at the Lister Hill Auditorium, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland.  
**Further information:** <http://www.afip.org/Departments/edu/upcoming.htm>.

**The 27th Annual Course Hepatopathology 2006: The Interpretation of Liver Biopsies** will be held September 13–15, 2006, at the Lister Hill Auditorium, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland.  
**Further information:** <http://www.afip.org/Departments/edu/upcoming.htm>.

**Prague Hepatology Meeting 2006** will be held in Prague, Czech Republic September 14–16, 2006.  
**Further information:** <http://www.czech-hepatology.cz/phm2006>.

**The 4th Annual New Advances & Controversies in Solid Organ Transplantation** will be held September 29–30, 2006, at the Coronado Island Marriott in San Diego, California.  
**Further information:** <http://www.scrippsclinic.com/Education/ContinuingEducation.cfm>.

**The American Society of Transplantation** will present **Study Design and End-Points**, a conference focusing on best practices in clinical trials, September 29–30, 2006, at the Sofitel Hotel in Rosemont, Illinois.  
**Further information:** [http://www.a-s-t.org/meeting/clinical\\_trials/index.htm](http://www.a-s-t.org/meeting/clinical_trials/index.htm).

**The 4th Annual World Congress on The Insulin Resistance Syndrome Insulin Resistance From Bench to Bedside & The Cardiovascular Connection** will be held October 5–7, 2006, at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.  
**Further information:** <http://www.insulinresistance.us>.

**The EASL Monothematic Conference Clinical Immunology in Viral Hepatitis** will be held October 7–8, 2006, in London, England.  
**Further information:** Contact [bookings@nexusgroup.co.uk](mailto:bookings@nexusgroup.co.uk).

**Coagulopathy in Liver Disease: Navigating the Cascade** will be held at the Omni Hotel, October 9–10, 2006,

in Charlottesville, Virginia.  
**Further information:** [www.coagulationinliverdisease.org](http://www.coagulationinliverdisease.org).

**The 3rd International Dominique Dormont Conference Host Pathogen Interactions in Chronic Infections: Viral Escape to Therapy in Chronic Infections** will take place in Bordeaux, France December 7–9, 2006.  
**Further information:** <http://www.congres-evenement.fr/VBCE/fr/index.php>.

To add your meeting to this list in an upcoming issue of *NEWS*, please email your information to [lprice@aasld.org](mailto:lprice@aasld.org). ■

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## AASLD Journals Maintain High Impact Factors

AASLD is pleased to report that the 2005 Impact Factor, released last month, indicated a #2 ranking for HEPATOLOGY in the gastroenterology and hepatology category, with an Impact Factor of 9.792.

*Liver Transplantation* showed an increase in its Impact Factor from 3.984 to 4.447, resulting in a number 2 ranking in the transplantation category, number 3 ranking in surgery, and number 6 ranking in gastroenterology and hepatology.

Congratulations to Dr. Andres Blei, HEPATOLOGY Editor-in-Chief, current *Liver Transplantation* Editors Drs. Jorge Rakela and John Fung, and previous *Liver Transplantation* Editors Drs. Ruud Krom and Russell Wiesner, as well as the editorial teams. ■



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## ADVANCED HEPATOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES



**APPLICATION  
DEADLINE**  
**September 1, 2006**

For the Fellowship Period  
of July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008



Providing salary and benefit support for GI fellows pursuing an additional, full year of training focused on patient care in hepatology (including liver transplantation) and hepatology research.



Eligibility criteria and an application are available in the Research Center at [www.aasld.org](http://www.aasld.org), or call 703-299-9766.



APPLICATION DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 1, 2006

# Showcase Carla Viscomi: Hepatology Associate Membership Founder

**R**ecent statistics show that the fastest growing segment in AASLD is the Associate membership. This month's NEWS highlights Carla Viscomi, who was instrumental in the creation of this group.

In the early 1990's, Carla, encouraged by her mentor, Dr. Anthony Tavill, attended several AASLD meetings with her colleague, Mary Ellen Geraghty. She realized this meeting provided a venue for education specific to liver diseases that was not available anywhere else for providers other than physicians. In 1995, Carla and Mary Ellen met with Dr. Tavill and Dr. Roy Ferguson to discuss the possibility of an organization for mid-level providers within the AASLD structure. Carla took hold of this opportunity, breaking ground with much hard work, and became the chairperson for the first Hepatology Associates Course held in Dallas, Texas in 1998. The attendance at that first meeting was encouraging. The course evaluations asked for more. Carla began to meet with key people to relay her vision for this mid-level group. With the help of a few volunteers, she continued to chair the Hepatology Associates Course and the next year the attendance grew higher.

With the recommendation and assistance of Dr. Tavill and Dr. Gene Schiff, Carla petitioned AASLD to create the Associate membership, and in 2000 it was approved. With the support of Dr. Bruce Bacon and Dr. Teresa Wright, the group received formal Associate membership status of the organization in 2002 with 44 charter members.

Carla's ability to respond to the educational needs of this diverse group resulted in the overwhelming success and growth of the Hepatology Associates Course. Working with the AASLD Board and Sherrie Cathcart, Executive Director of AASLD, an educational subcommittee was developed which contained diverse representation



*Carla Viscomi was instrumental in creating the Associate member category for AASLD.*

including associates from academic, Veterans Health Administration, and community-based practices. This committee continues to strive to meet the emerging needs of Associate members,

now including RNs, pharmacists, clinical research coordinators, medical assistants, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and PhDs.

Carla, being a clinical research coordinator, also felt strongly about incorporating research into the course. Through the development of a special sub-committee, abstracts submitted by mid-level providers were accepted for review and the two top ranked were given podium presentations at the Hepatology Associates Course in 2004. This was so well received that the Associates' research has been showcased in subsequent courses.

Beginning in 2003, Clinical Hepatology Fellowships were made available to nurse practitioners and physician assistants through the support of Schering-Plough, Roche Laboratories, and Ortho Biotech. These fellowships allow NPs and PAs to receive outstanding training in hepatology under the supervision of qualified AASLD members throughout the country.

*(See VISCOMI, p. 8)*

## October is National Liver Awareness Month – The American Liver Foundation Urges Americans to Take Care of Their Livers

**O**ctober is National Liver Awareness Month, sponsored by the American Liver Foundation (ALF).

According to ALF, one in 10 Americans are affected by liver disease; however, many are not aware of prevention methods and treatment options available. During October, ALF urges Americans to take control of their health by learning about their liver.

ALF's 25 nationwide chapters pro-

vide community outreach, educational services, and support groups year-round, while planning special events for the month of October. Events including liver walks, golf classics, and Halloween bashes will help to engage and educate the public while raising money for research.

To participate in your area, visit ALF's Web site at <http://www.liverfoundation.org/news.shtml> to find a listing of events.

## Association Purchases New Office Space; Staff to Move in February of 2007



AASLD will move into their new office space in February 2007. Located in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia, the building will provide a larger amount of room for offices and meetings, a convenient location, and a beautiful view of the Potomac River.

### (VISCOMI, from p. 7)

A select group of Associate members working with Dr. Hugo Vargas designed the curriculum, established selection rules, and developed an application that was approved by the Governing Board in record time. The first applications were accepted in April 2004, and after detailed review, 30 were ultimately selected from almost 60 candidates. To date there have been a total of 64 recipients. These outstanding awardees continue to make a positive impact in the

care of their liver patients around the country.

Associate membership has now grown to 273, and 456 associates attended our course at the 2005 Annual meeting. Our Associates want to thank Carla Viscomi for her pioneer vision, persistence, and outstanding leadership on our behalf. We have come a long way in a few short years, and we look forward to being a continued part of AASLD and the vital quest for excellence in education as well as practice. ■

### (EXTERNAL FUNDS, from p. 1)

AASLD educational programs and included in the operating budget (non pass-through) should not exceed the amount of internal funding during the term of any strategic planning period (customarily 5 years).

- As required by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), AASLD's educational projects comply with guidelines to ensure independence from the interests of external funders.
- AASLD determines the process for the selection of research award and fellowship recipients. External funders have no input in the selection criteria and receive information about which recipients received funding only after AASLD has made a decision. External funders may not impose obligations on a recipient of an award or fellowship.
- When accepting external funds for a research or educational project, AASLD reserves the right to all intellectual properties resulting from the project.
- Access to members is not a condition of acceptance of support from an external funder.
- AASLD discloses all activities that are partially or completely financed by external funds and establishes levels of recognition based upon the magnitude of support. Under no circumstances do these acknowledgements advertise any products or services of the funder.
- The AASLD President approves any quest for external funding, determines the appropriate level of funding for each project, and may consult the AASLD executive committee if a conflict of interest is perceived. Should the executive committee have any concerns about an issue of either real or perceived conflict of interest, the executive committee may refer the issue to the AASLD ethics committee for further review and recommendations. ■

# "I Don't Do Public Policy, I Do Science"

The above headline sums up many scientists' view of public policy.

It reflects a mindset that suggests that the two issues – public policy and science – are not related and that it is possible to do one without the other. In an ideal world, of course, that would be the case. However, this is not an ideal world.

The level of political interference and manipulation of science has reached epidemic proportions. In the March 13, 2006, issue of *The New Yorker*, Michael Specter details a series of examples, among which are:

- Opposition to requiring HPV vaccination for school attendance;
- Removal of information concerning condoms from the CDC website;
- The FDA's non-decision about the Plan B emergency contraceptive;
- Opposition to existing standards concerning mercury pollution;
- Withdrawal of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change;
- Opposition to federal funding for needle exchange; and,
- Opposition to the creation of new stem cell lines.

In addition, no document has more influence on public policy than the President's annual budget recommendations to Congress. Budget documents, by their very nature, are political documents designed to set a direction for public policy.

Therefore, when a budget recommends fewer R-01 grants in the next year than are to be awarded in the current year, that is a policy statement with a direct impact on science. Likewise, when a budget recommends flat funding for health services research or less funding for the public health initiatives of the CDC, that is also a policy statement with a direct impact on science.

It is for this reason that AASLD has a public policy committee (PPC) that is focused twelve months a year on

monitoring, analyzing, and influencing public policy in a manner designed to promote science. The PPC produces an agenda at its face-to-face meeting during the Annual Meeting for the following calendar year. That agenda is then sent to the Board for its review, alteration, and approval. Once approved, it becomes the direction to the committee, the staff, and its consultants for that year.

The provisions of that agenda – whether they relate to NIH funding; implementation of the Liver Research Action Plan; reimbursement of physicians; creating a home for liver disease within the CDC; broader recognition of the ALT as a measure of liver wellness – are all designed to improve research and patient care. That is to say, they are all designed to enhance your ability to practice your science.

For this reason, it is critical that every AASLD member become a policy advocate for science. The word "lobbyist" has taken on a negative connotation as a result of the illegal activities of a few persons conducted in the name of lobbying. But, in fact, every scientist and every physician must be a lobbyist.

Members of Congress do not know your field like you do. Certainly, their young staffs, most of whom are trained in the social sciences, not the hard sciences, do not know your field like you. Certainly, the number crunchers in the federal bureaucracy, who decide how much money is going to NIH, or CDC, or HRSA, or AHRQ, don't know your field like you do.

It is imperative that policy advocacy become ingrained in the worldview of all AASLD members. You can be assured that such a mindset is ingrained in those who believe that science should be used to advance ideological agendas. And, for the moment, they are winning the battle. The future health and wellness of our population demands that they not win the war. ■

(PRESIDENT, from p. 1)

Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). We were unable to meet with representatives of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), but have arranged a conference call with Dr. John Niederhuber, acting director of NCI.

Each meeting involved a dialogue about how AASLD can work most effectively with each institute to enhance the amount of hepatobiliary research in their portfolios. All of the institutes were pleased by AASLD's NIH Corner initiative to highlight one institute at each of our annual meetings. NIAAA, the institute highlighted during our 2005 meeting, reported increased collaborations with AASLD members and funding of new grants submitted by investigators who attended the meeting. NIDA looks forward to being highlighted this year and has extensive plans to encourage applications from hepatologists for future studies. NIAID discussed the status of hepatobiliary-related research in viral hepatitis, HIV and coinfections, immunology, autoimmunity, and transplantation. Their priorities indicate increasing opportunities for basic and clinical research applications from hepatologists. Finally, NIDDK provided a status report of the Trans-NIH Liver Research Action Plan and funding priorities. Each of the institutes noted that the lack of congressional appropriations for NIH this year would result in the lowest pay lines in history. Having anticipated the extraordinary need for money to support NIH-funding investigators, AASLD explored ways to use funds generated by us in a major development campaign to promote hepatobiliary research. Such mechanisms, pioneered by the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, are able to provide matching funds to help increase the pay line. Another common theme was the need for hepatologists and liver transplant surgeons to provide expertise as ad hoc consultants, reviewers on study sections, and members of special committees. To achieve

(See PRESIDENT, p. 10)

(PRESIDENT, from p. 9)

this mutually beneficial goal, AASLD will be asking you for your permission to share your contact information and a list of your areas of expertise with NIH. I hope that you will consent to serve and ably represent us all.

The second major activity was the meeting of the scientific program selection committee, which is responsible for selecting all the presentations at The Liver Meeting™ 2006 in Boston, October 27-31. You will be very pleased by the high quality of both the basic science and clinical research to be presented at our annual meeting. Of 2,349 abstracts submitted, 198 were selected for oral presentations in 6 plenary sessions, including 2 devoted to transplantation, 25 parallel sessions, and 1,137 will be presented as posters. This outstanding program showcases the depth and breadth of our collective progress in

advancing both the science and practice of hepatology and liver transplantation.

I am also delighted with this year's state-of-the-art topics and our talented speakers:

- Leon Schiff state-of-the-art: Pier M. Mannucci, MD – Effects of Hoostasis in Liver Disease: Re-appraisal of Their Clinical Significance.
- Thomas E. Starzl Transplant state-of-the-art: Peter G. Stock, MD, PhD – Don't Judge a Book By Its Cover: The Unexpected Outcomes Following Solid Organ Transplantation in the HIV Positive Recipient.
- Hans Popper state-of-the-art: Ian Nicholas Crispe, PhD – Hepatic Immune Responses: Pathology and Tolerance.
- Hyman Zimmerman state-of-the-art: Willis C. Maddrey, MD – Drug-induced Liver Disease: The Risk Profile of Statins.

The third major activity was a meeting of AASLD's executive committee and executive director with the leadership of the American Liver Foundation (ALF), which included their President and CEO, chairman of the board of directors, chair of the ALF strategic planning committee, treasurer, and chairs of both the scientific affairs and public policy committees. Our purpose was to discuss and evaluate each other's strategic plans to identify areas where we could likely achieve synergy, those with a potential for activities that are additive, and those activities and priorities unique to our respective missions and constituencies. This discussion has provided both organizations with an initial roadmap for our joint, as well as complimentary, activities. I am very pleased that ALF has enthusiastically endorsed AASLD's initiative to estab-

(See PRESIDENT, p. 11)

## Dr. Garcia-Tsao Teaches AASLD Staff About the Liver

Class began promptly at 2 p.m. on July 13, after the staff of AASLD filed into the office conference room. Dr. Guadalupe Garcia-Tsao, or Lupe as the professor allowed us to call her, began her lesson by giving us a broad overview of the liver's functions and assuring us that the liver is in fact the most important organ in the human body. ("The heart is overrated!" she said)

Throughout the session, AASLD staff was encouraged to ask questions as we learned more about the organ we work for every day. Topics covered included the hepatitis viruses, drug-induced liver injury, fatty liver disease, and cirrhosis, as well other conditions that many of us could not pronounce. A paperboard allowed Lupe to provide visuals of the various organs and conditions and to help clarify the complicated subject matter.

AASLD staff left the two-hour class session with a much better appreciation of the liver and of the work we do each day in regards to the study of this important organ.



Dr. Garcia-Tsao instructs AASLD staff on the inner workings of the human liver.

(PRESIDENT, from p. 10)

lish alanine aminotransferase (ALT) as a new HEDIS® standard. The public awareness portion of this campaign will commence at our annual meeting and will involve collaborative efforts between our two organizations to reach out to the public and press.

As I noted in the last issue of AASLD NEWS, the Governing Board decided to purchase space for our central office, rather than relocate our operations to newly leased space. I am pleased to report that the purchase of an entire floor with 22,000 square feet of space is now completed. Ownership will permit the necessary planned growth of AASLD to provide increased services and programs to members and will provide AASLD with an equity asset. Our staff has been working with the architects and contractors and plans to move in during February 2007. We invite all members to visit whenever they are in the Washington, D.C. area.

Finally, I am pleased to report that AASLD remains in excellent financial health. In 2006 we have continued our investment strategies with Yanni Partners to increase AASLD's assets. Our 2006 budget, which has been carefully linked and allocated to our mission and strategic plan, including our two premier journals, increased numbers of single topic conferences (produced by AASLD alone or in collaboration with the European Association for the Study of Liver Diseases), The Liver Meeting™, our component of the annual DDW meetings, Liver Scholar Awards to promote the career development of junior faculty, Advanced Hepatology Fellowships, the AASLD NP/PA Fellowship, and the proactive agendas of both our public policy and clinical policy committees. The success of AASLD's budgeted activities depends on the superb work of our dedicated and talented staff, led by Ms. Sherrie Cathcart, executive director, and the tireless efforts of our members who serve on our committees. The Governing Board and I are grateful to all of you who have contributed to the growth and success of AASLD. ■

## Li Wang Receives Liver Scholar Award

The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases and the American Liver Foundation have named Dr. Li Wang, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Therapeutics at the University of Kansas Medical Center, a recipient of the 2006 Liver Scholar Award for her project *Nuclear Receptor SHP-Mediated Regulation of Hepatic Lipid Homeostasis*. The award is a three-year, basic science award of \$75,000 annually that endeavors to encourage young investigators to pursue a career in liver-related research.

Dr. Wang completed her undergraduate work, and then went on to receive both her Masters degree and PhD from Zhongshan University in Guangzhou, China. She moved to the United States in 2000 to do post-doctoral research under the direction of Dr. DD Moore at Baylor College of Medicine. During this time, she was extremely productive in her research and made a significant contribution to understanding the role of SHP in regulation of metabolic diseases, including fatty liver.

A junior faculty member, Dr. Wang feels that the Liver Scholar Award provides a tremendous opportunity to reach her goal of developing an innovative and interdisciplinary program to study the regulatory role of SHP in fatty liver disease. This award also provides excellent support in her transition from a new junior faculty to an independent investigator in the field of metabolic disorders. The award will enable her to test her hypothesis and obtain additional preliminary results to successfully compete for NIH funding to support further studies of the role of SHP in liver lipid disorders. She considers the award such a great, yet "very unexpected," honor, as only two doctors in the nation were selected to receive this prestigious award. She also feels proud that she is the first Kansas-based doctor to receive the award. Dr. Wang would like to thank AASLD and



Dr. Li Wang, recipient of a 2006 Liver Scholar Award, in her lab at the University of Kansas Medical Center

ALF for selecting her to receive this honor, and also thanks her mentor, Dr. Curt Hagedorn, for his support.

The project will focus on identifying the genes associated with fatty liver disease to determine what molecule is targeted and which gene plays the most important role in preventing fatty liver disease. When asked what long-term goals she hopes to accomplish with this research, Dr. Wang replies that she wants to become an independent and leading investigator in the area of nuclear receptor regulation of intermediary metabolism. She is striving to achieve the highest possible standards in her research. The ultimate goal of the study would be "to identify target genes, and pave the way for new therapeutic interventions for fatty liver disease and its associated metabolic disorders."

Dr. Wang was born and raised in China and has greatly enjoyed travel in past years; she is currently very focused on research and donates most of her time to her studies. She resides in beautiful Overland Park, Kansas with her daughter and "very supportive" husband. "A happy family is as equally important as my research," she said. ■

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AASLD News is published six times a year and is an exclusive benefit of membership. The material published in each issue is provided to inform readers about the Association's activities. Please send comments to [aasld@aasld.org](mailto:aasld@aasld.org).

### AASLD'S MISSION

AASLD IS A LEADING ORGANIZATION  
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## MARK THE DATES

For Annual Meeting information, please contact:

**Pam Ballinger**  
C/O Association  
Headquarters  
856-439-0500

For all other meetings, please contact the **AASLD central office:**  
703-299-9766.



**Membership Application Deadline**  
September 7, 2006

**Clinical Research STC**  
*Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis*  
September 7-9, 2006  
Atlanta, GA

**Transplant Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) Review Course**  
September 16-17, 2006  
Chicago, IL

**The Liver Meeting®**  
**57th Annual AASLD Annual Meeting**  
October 27-31, 2006  
Boston, MA

**NIDDK Director Vacancy Deadline July 31, 2006**  
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking exceptional candidates for the position of Director, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). Applicants must possess an MD or PhD, or comparable doctorate degree in the health sciences field plus senior-level scientific experience and outstanding scientific knowledge of research programs in one or more scientific areas related to diabetes, digestive diseases, and kidney diseases.

## THANK YOU

**A**ASLD sincerely thanks the following entities for their generous support of the Association and its activities:

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