

# SNM History Corner

**M**any changes have occurred over the past 40 years with the growth of the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM). Most importantly, nuclear medicine has become a recognized specialty. To refresh members about the SNM, *SourceLine* strolled down memory lane to see who was responsible for the formation of the SNM. Look in *SourceLine* over the next few months for future historical SNM facts.

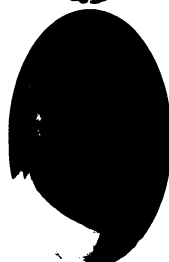
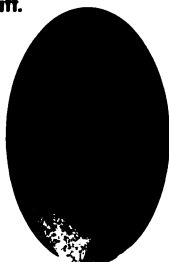
## The Story

The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) was conceived by Norman J. Holter, a physicist, chemist and engineer who invented the Holter monitor and lived in Helena, MN. Holter was the first to propose and name a society devoted specifically to nuclear medicine. "The creation of a society dedicated to nuclear medicine was simply to exchange information with other people in the field and to brag about each other's accomplishments to people who would appreciate them," said William J. MacIntyre, PhD, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH, a SNM member since 1957. Officially, however, the Society spelled out its original objectives as follows: to promote the discussion and communication of knowledge for nuclear phenomena to the better understanding and control of diseases.

Holter initially became interested in the applications of radioactive materials to medicine with his experience in radiation measurements from tests on nuclear weapons in the South Pacific. A few physicians were already interested in such applications, but gave little attention to the formation of a nuclear medicine society. But this fact did not discourage Holter; he decided to devote a society to medical applications of radioactivity and formed the Montana Society of Nuclear Medicine.

Since Holter owned a telephone company, he used that medium to arrange a meeting of the Montana Society and spoke to colleagues and friends in the Pacific Northwest area who

Left column top to bottom: Asa Seeds; Charles P. Wilson; Tyra T. Hutchens; Norman J. Holter; A. Kearney Atkinson; Rex L. Huff.



Right column top to bottom: Eggert T. Feldsted; William H. Hannah; Joseph P. Nealen; Thomas Carlile; Robert G. Moffat; Milo Harris.

might be interested in joining the Society. The first meeting was January 19, 1954 at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane, WA. There, twelve men each contributed \$10 toward the meeting. Additionally, the founders of the Society agreed that no one person could become competent in the areas of physics, chemistry, mathematics and medicine required for the effective development of radioactivity in diagnosis and treatment. Their answer: to organize a nuclear medicine society, naming it the Society of Nuclear Medicine.

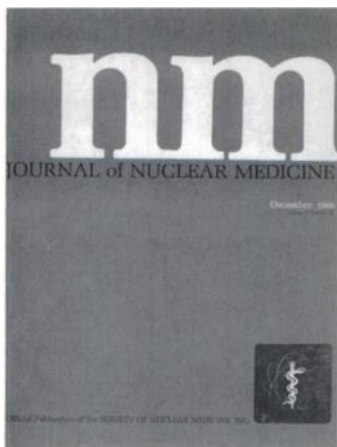
From the beginning, the SNM was multidisciplinary. Four of the founders were radiologists: Milo Harris, Spokane, WA; Thomas Carlile, Seattle, WA; Eggert T. Feldsted, Vancouver, BC; Asa Seeds, Vancouver, WA. Three were internists: A Kearney Atkinson, Great Falls, MN; Robert G. Moffat, Vancouver, BC; Charles P. Wilson, Portland, OR; one research physician and cardiac physiologist, Rex L. Huff, Seattle, WA; one pathologist, Tyra T. Hutchens, Portland, OR; the remainder were nonphysicians: Joseph P. Nealen, a physicist from Spokane, WA; William H. Hannah, a medical physicist from Bremerton, WA and Norman J. Holter a physicist from Helena, MN. Thomas Carlile was elected the first President of the Society and Asa Seeds was named the first Secretary.

It was only 25 years ago that nuclear medicine technologists joined the Society, and within that time the goals and interests of the Society have remained the same—to further the progress of nuclear medicine, MacIntyre said. "Communication between physicians and technologists make the nuclear medicine field more knowledgeable and effective," said Captain William H. Briner, FACNP, associate professor of radiology, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD.

One of the main purposes of the Society was to develop and exchange scientific information about nuclear medicine among its membership. So in 1960, George E. Thoma, MD, St. Louis, MO, became the editor of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*: contents of the journal included many of the same topics that appear today such as therapeutic applications and dosimetry estimates.

## The First SNM Annual Meeting

Seeds spread the word about the first



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annual meeting of the SNM, which took place May 29-30, 1954 in Seattle, WA. Since it was being held in a large and prominent city, organizers hoped to attract 25 or 30 attendees to the meeting. Active membership dues were \$10 per year and associate membership dues were \$5 per year. Society membership was open to physicians, physicists and research scientists interested in the medical application of radioactive

isotopes. The meeting was held at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel where an audience of 109 physicians, physical scientists and technicians

heard 13 scientific papers and one panel discussion.

Despite its growth, the SNM strives to foster the goodwill exhibited during its earlier meetings and the intentions of the founding fathers. "I joined the Society in 1961 for its educational functions and to keep abreast in the advancement of science and medicine. But things have changed. Back then, I used to know everyone, now there is an absence of camaraderie," said Briner.

## THE JAPANESE SOCIETY OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE: 35TH ANNUAL MEETING

For the first time in its history, international sessions of the Japanese Society of Nuclear Medicine's Annual Meeting were held in which oral presentations were given in English, including proffered papers and educational lectures. Approximately 1800 people gathered in Yokohama City, Japan the first week of October to participate in the Society's 35th Annual Meeting events. Nuclear medicine physicians, technologists, radiologists and residents from around the world attended the meeting, including attendees from Korea, China, Thailand, Belgium, Vietnam, Australia, Germany, Canada, United States and Japan.

"This session gave a good opportunity for overseas participants to taste the flavor of Japanese nuclear medicine and for Japanese participants to experience the atmosphere of a true international meeting," said Yasuhito Sasaki, MD, President of The Japanese Society of Nuclear Medicine. One panel discussion, entitled "Nuclear Medicine in Asia and Oceania" emphasized international aspects of nuclear medicine. Five panelists talked about the present state of nuclear medicine in Korea, China, Thailand, Japan and Australia.

The scientific programs consisted of 609 papers (423 oral and 186 poster presentations), 2 special lectures, 2 symposia, 1 panel discussion and 24 educational lectures. Henry N. Wagner, Jr., MD, professor of radiology and radiological sciences, director of the division of nuclear medicine Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Baltimore, MD, and a longstanding SNM member gave a special lecture on the future of nuclear medicine at the turn of the century. In his lecture Wagner stressed how nuclear medicine is able to translate the revolutionary advances in molecular biology and genetics into the care of patients.

## National Growth

Over the next two years, nuclear medicine societies formed across the country. The Pacific Northwest Society of Nuclear Medicine, the Southern California and Central (Chicago) arose independently, but began to affiliate with the national Society in 1956. The Salt Lake City meeting was the first to attract national attention; attendees came from all parts of the country and participated in a well-balanced scientific program.

Current goals of the SNM essentially echo those developed by the founders: to educate about the safe and effective use of radioactive materials in medical diagnosis and therapy and to disseminate and exchange the latest scientific information. "Science as a whole has changed with its high technology and the development of new radiopharmaceuticals. Thus the Society has grown, improving and reinforcing its reason for existence," said MacIntyre. If members recall the history of events differently, we welcome your comments.

—Information acquired from  
Craig Harris, MS, Durham, NC and Marshall Brucer  
(J Nucl Med 1978;19:581-598)



Opening ceremony of  
the 35th Annual  
Meeting in Yokohama  
City, Japan.

Paper presentations focused on state-of-the-art applications

and new methodology, drug development and regional interests, ranging from basic experiments to clinical applications and radiation protection. Although paper presentations covered a variety of topics: cardiology, neurology, lung and bone, and oncology were key issues. A few clinical studies reported on ISDN infusion using <sup>99m</sup>Tc-MIBI and <sup>123</sup>I-IPPN.

Educational lectures highlighted current applications of various nuclear medicine tests such as brain PET and SPECT imaging, radioimmunodetection and new advances in instrumentation and image processing techniques. The recent development of SPECT scanners with PET coincidence capability attracted special interest, as about 1000 institutes performing in vivo nuclear medicine procedures, including SPECT, are all willing to use [<sup>18</sup>F]FDG for routine clinical studies.

Next year, the 36th Annual Meeting of The Japanese Society of Nuclear Medicine will be held jointly with the 6th Asia and Oceania Congress of Nuclear Medicine. For more information contact: Professor Junji Konishi, Department of Nuclear Medicine, Kyoto University School of Medicine. Fax: 81-75-771-9709.