



# Western Neurosurgical Society Newsletter

## Fall/Winter 2023

**WNS PRESIDENT 2023-2024  
DR. MARCO LEE**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Changing of the Guard p. 1**

**70th WNS Meeting Recap pp 2-3**

**Meet the New Members p. 4**

**Q&A with our Chairs and Exec  
p. 5, 7-9**

**Committees 2023-24 p. 6**

**And the winners are p. 10.**

**71st Annual Western Neurosurgical  
Meeting • p. 11**

**Sun Valley Conference p. 12**



**CHANGING OF  
THE GUARD**



## Winner Basic Science Award

Jacob Young, MD (Again!)

University of California, San Francisco

Systemic neutralization of IL6 sensitizes IDH-wildtype glioblastoma preclinical models to immune checkpoint inhibition.



**KATIE O'MEARA  
ORRICO, ESQ**

**FIRST RANDY SMITH  
LECTURER**



## Winner Clinical Science Award

Gianna Fote, MD, PhD

University of California, Irvine

Non-invasive intracranial pressure monitoring demonstrates treatment-responsive alterations in cerebral compliance in idiopathic normal pressure hydrocephalus.



**2023 PROLO LECTURER**

**Kelley M. Skeff, MD, PhD, MACP**





## 2023 CLOWARD AWARD WINNER

Mitchel S. Berger, MD, FACS. FAANS

Berthold and Belle N. Guggenheimer Professor of the Department of Neurological Surgery at the University of California, San Francisco.

## LOCAL INTEREST LECTURER

Patrick Webster  
Undersea Specialist  
on the Wonders of Inner Space of Planet Ocean

@underwaterpat



Who has won the most Apple Watches?



# MEET THE NEW MEMBERS!



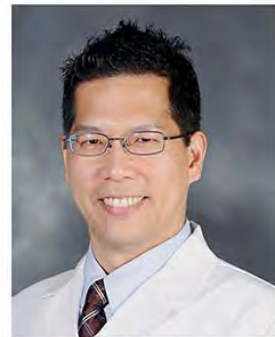
## 2023 New Members



**Ausuf Bari**  
University of California  
Los Angeles, CA



**Krista Greenan**  
UC Health Brain & Spine  
Colorado Springs, CO



**Brian Lee**  
University of Southern CA  
Los Angeles, CA



**Barbara Lazio**  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Hillsboro, OR



**Won Kim**  
University of California  
Los Angeles, CA



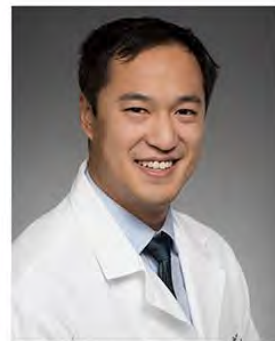
**Michael Lim**  
Stanford  
Palo Alto, CA



**Alex Khalessi**  
University of California  
San Diego, CA



**Benjamin Yim**  
East Bay Brain and Spine  
Walnut Creek, CA.



**Andrew Ko**  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA

# To change things up, the Communications Committee decided to ask a few questions:

## The AUDIT CHAIR

**John McVicker**

**Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?** Sun Valley, because we got to go fly fishing, the Cloward Orator was a favorite of mine with a great talk, the Medtronic Trailer was there with tons of goodies to play with, and Randy Smith's soliloquy was in rare form that year.

**What's on your bucket list for travel? Where is the most special place you have been?** Bucket list is Split and Dubrovnik, and most special is the Isle of Skye, my ancestral home.

**For those who have been a member more than 10 years: What advice would you give our younger members?** You can make more of a difference than you think you can. You just need to step out.

**Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? What do you still love about it?** That's complicated! But the amazing anatomy and physiology drew me initially and continue to thrill me.

**What is the last best book that you have read and why?**

*Path Lit by Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe*, by David Maraniss. Highlights what talent stoked by perseverance can accomplish despite great obstacles.

**Finally, anything you want to say about your WNS committee?** The dream team!



## THE HISTORIAN

**Charles Nussbaum**



**Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?**

The 1997 meeting in Ojai. This was my first meeting, and it was such a pleasure to be welcomed, and to meet so many people that would wind up becoming dear friends over the next 26 years. My wife Debbie also enjoyed the meeting. We have not missed a meeting since.

**For those who have been a member more than 10 years: What advice would you give our younger members?**

Help out by volunteering for a committee. The group is always looking for those willing to work for the WNS and have new ideas. Just ask a committee Chair or the President.

**Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? What do you still love about it?**

I chose neurosurgery because of the anatomic detail and technical challenges, as well as the opportunity to make a significant impact on someone's life and/or function.

**What is the last best book that you have read and why?**

*American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant*. I enjoy reading history and especially biographies about those that are more complicated than what popular opinion espouses.

**Finally, anything you want to say about your WNS committee?** I am a member of the site committee. It is always a pleasure. It is very fun to consider where the group should go next, and to search out new venues.

## Western Neurosurgical Society Board Members 2023-24

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Marco Lee President  
Andrew Little, Vice President  
Odette Harris, President Elect  
Justin Dye, Secretary-Treasurer  
Charles Nussbaum, Historian  
Jay K Morgan, Past President

### **STANDING COMMITTEES**

#### **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

John McVicker, Chair  
Rick Chua  
Odette Harris  
Richard Wohns

#### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

Melanie Hayden Gephart, Chair  
Sharona Ben-Heim  
Samer Ghostine  
Maziyar Kalani  
Praveen Mummaneni  
Laura Snyder

#### **LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Sharona Ben-Heim, Chair

#### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

J. Adair Prall, Chair  
Mark Belza  
Ray Chu  
Gregg Gerras  
Laura Prolo  
Amir Vookshoor  
David Westra

#### **SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE**

Austin Colohan, Chair  
Mark Belza  
Richard Chua  
Ciara Harraher  
Charlie Nussbaum  
David Pitkethly

#### **BY-LAWS COMMITTEE**

Mark Linskey, Chair  
Charlie Nussbaum  
Adair Prall

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Jay Morgan, Chair  
Linda Liau  
Tom Scully  
Javed Siddiqui

### **COMMUNICATIONS/WEBSITE**

Deborah Henry, Chair  
Moustapha Abou-Samra  
Adair Prall  
Justin Dye

### **AWARDS COMMITTEE**

Odette Harris, Chair  
David Pitkethly  
Gary Steinberg  
Martin Weinand

### **AD HOC COMMITTEES**

#### **CME COMMITTEE**

Laura Prolo, Chair

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Joseph Chen  
Rick Chua  
John Ratcliff  
Javed Siddiqui

#### **DEI COMMITTEE**

Ciara Harraher, Chair  
Estrada Bernard  
Samer Ghostine  
Linda Liau  
Laura Snyder

#### **DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Jason Hauptman, Chair  
Christine Smith  
Anand Veeravagu  
Amir Vookshoor  
Richard Wohns

#### **MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE**

Marvin Bergsneider, Chair  
Arjun Pendharka  
Tom Scully  
Mark Sedrak

#### **INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE**

Isaac Yang, Chair

## THE COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

Debbie Henry

### **Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?**

There are a lot, but if I had to pick, Alaska (2008). It was my second time to this great state. Afterwards, we toured Denali National Park. Stephen was 8.

### **What's on your bucket list for travel? Where is the most special place you have been?**

My bucket list has narrowed after visiting Antarctica during COVID in 2020, finishing my continents. But most special was Africa: safaris in South Africa, Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, and everything in Egypt. I head to Kenya with Darla Colohan and a group of students in June 2024. Iceland (aurora borealis) and the falls of South America are on the list.

### **For those who have been a member more than 10 years: What advice would you give our younger members?**

Help shape the Social Media committee!

### **Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? What do you still love about it?**

The logic of the nervous system and the complexity of the diseases. Nothing beats the anatomy.

### **What is the last best book that you have read and why?**

I just finished *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann. It is amazing what we never learned in history class.

### **Finally, anything you want to say about your WNS committee?**

I couldn't have a more responsive team. If you would like something in a Newsletter, email me: [dchenry.md@gmail.com](mailto:dchenry.md@gmail.com)



## THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

### Justin Dye

**Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?** Our favorite Western meeting was at the Fairmont Banff Springs in 2017. It was our first time in Banff and our kids had a great time exploring 'the castle' and the surrounding trails.

**What's on your bucket list for travel? Where is the most special place you have been?** I'd like to visit the Philippines where my wife, Richelin's parents are from. Richelin and I took a trip to Rome in 2012 before we had kids. Life hasn't slowed down since!

**Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? What do you still love about it?** I decided on neurosurgery because of the anatomy and the variety of operations. The most gratifying part of my job now is working with a resident or fellow for multiple years and watching them become more independent in complex cases.

**What is the last best book that you have read and why?** *Conquistadors of the Useless*. I like mountaineering books and this one has many inspirational quotes.

**Finally, anything you want to say about your WNS committee?** I'd like to say thank you to everyone that made the 2023 meeting in Monterey a success. I had a lot of help and support in my first year as Secretary Treasurer and I can't say thank you enough. Now I'm looking forward to the 2024 meeting in Del Mar and I hope to see all of you and your families there!



## The MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

### J. Adair Prall

**Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?** 2016, Carlsbad Park Hyatt; My whole family came, and we went to Legoland one of the afternoons!

**What's on your bucket list for travel? Where is the most special place you have been?** Our family loves to travel - planning a big family trip to Africa this summer, in South Africa and Rwanda; Iceland and the Azores are on the list too! A prior trip to Africa was my most memorable - hence returning with all the kids.

**For those who have been a member more than 10 years: What advice would you give our younger members?** Just barely ten years but... put yourself out there to say hello to and meet older members; in the setting of the Western, people are much more receptive and available for meeting new/younger colleagues than at other academic meetings, in my experience.

**Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? What do you still love about it?** It was the hardest and most interesting thing I could think of doing; it still is, but the rewards are great; we help and often save people's lives every week! What could be better!

**What is the last best book that you have read and why?** *Empire of the Summer Moon* by S.C Gwynne, the story of the Comanche nation and its demise as Americans moved west. It is a story of the bravery, cunning and brilliance of the fiercest of Native American peoples, as they slowly succumbed to pioneers migrating through their world. History you don't hear about in school.

**Finally, anything you want to say about your WNS committee?** The membership committee has been really fun for me, given how easy it is for me to sell the WNS to potential new members. I have never had more fun in an academic organization, nor felt more bonded to other members and their families, and that's an easy message deliver to people!





## LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS CHAIR

Sharona Ben-Heim

### **Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?**



I loved the meeting in Banff. It was one of my first meetings and had a combination of amazing scenery, great hiking, and a warm introduction to a very special group of people at the Western.

### **What's on your bucket list for travel? Where is the most special place you have been?**

I would love to explore more aspects of Asia, especially Thailand and Vietnam. Before starting as faculty at UC San Diego, my husband and I took an amazing trip to Africa, including a Safari in the Serengeti, visiting the mountain gorillas in the Bwindi Forest, and even climbing to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro - a big feat for a person who is not particularly athletic!

### **Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? What do you still love about it?**

I feel lucky every day to be able to offer my patients innovative solutions to improve their quality of life. I've always been fascinated by neuromodulation and am passionate about continuing to push its boundaries.

### **What is the last best book that you have read and why?**

I just finished reading Cheryl Strayed's "Tiny Beautiful Things." It gives incredible perspective on the toughest aspects of life.

### **Finally, anything you want to say about your WNS committee?**

Looking forward to seeing everyone in San Diego in 2024!

## THE VICE PRESIDENT and EXHIBITOR COMMITTEE CHAIR

### **Where was your favorite Western meeting? Why?**

Our favorite meeting was Banff, Alberta, Canada in 2017. Even though it was smokey, the spirit of the society came through. Lucy Kalanithi gave an incredibly moving talk on life and dying. There wasn't a dry eye in the audience.

### **What's on your bucket list for travel?**

African Safari

### **Where is the most special place you have been?**

Inca Trail and Machu Picchu, Peru

### **For those who have been a member more than 10 years: What advice would you give our younger members?**

Bring your best science to the meeting. Keep elevating the scientific quality of the society.

### **Why did you choose neurosurgery as a career? I was drawn to the technical challenge and providing care to people in their worst moments. What do you still love about it?**

My career has grown in unexpected ways, and I continue to remain fulfilled and challenged as I enrich my clinical practice, research program, and leadership activities.

### **What is the last best book that you have read and why?**

*Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman. This book taught me how we make decisions and the cognitive and behavioral biases we employ. My hope is that this awareness of heuristics has helped me make better medical and life decisions.



## IN SUMMARY

### #1 FAVORITE WESTERN MEETING:

**BANFF!**

**RUNNER UPS:** SUN VALLEY, OJAI, CARLSBAD, ALASKA

### BOOKS TO READ:

*Path Lit by Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe* by David Maraniss

*American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant* by Ron C. White

*Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann

*Conquistadors of the Useless* by Lionel Terray

*Empire of the Summer Moon* by S.C. Gwynne

*Tiny Beautiful Things* by Cheryl Strayed

*Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman



### BEST PLACES VISITED:

Africa

### BUCKET LIST PLACES:

Africa, Peru, Thailand, Vietnam, Azores, Iceland, Split and Dubrovnik

### WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WESTERN:

- ⇒ You can make more of a difference than you think you can. You just need to step out.
- ⇒ Help shape the Social Media committee! WAY: Contact Isaac Yang at [IYang@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:IYang@mednet.ucla.edu)
- ⇒ Help out by volunteering for a committee. The group is always looking for those willing to work for the WNS and have new ideas. Just ask a committee Chair or the President.

### CHECK OUT OUR NEW [WESTNSURG.COM](http://WESTNSURG.COM) WEBSITE.

Member login: Username: Cloward

Password: WNSBiltmore1955!

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

# Western Neurosurgical Society

70th Annual Meeting  
Fairmont Grand Del Mar  
San Diego, California  
September 5-8, 2024



Thank you to Medtronic, Gold Level Support  
at the 69<sup>th</sup> Western Neurosurgical Meeting



*From your Communications and Website Committee:*

*Chair- Deborah Henry*

*Moustapha Abou-Samra*

*Adair Prall*

*Justin Dye*

*Photography: Charles Nussbaum, Deborah Henry, and Justin Dye*

# 2024 Conference

Join us February 1-3, 2024, for the Annual Sun Valley Cerebrovascular Conference

REGISTER  
HERE

CALL FOR  
ABSTRACTS

[www.sunvalleycerebrovascularconference.org](http://www.sunvalleycerebrovascularconference.org)

## Sun Valley Cerebrovascular Conference 2024



### Highlighted topics:

- Understanding cerebrovascular trailblazers
- Navigating challenging treatment scenarios
- Interactive case presentations, hot topics and debates
- Using systems and technology to improve outcomes



## Expanding Indications for Intervention

A conference for medical providers involved in the treatment of cerebrovascular disorders and stroke.

Presented by St. Luke's Neurosciences in partnership with the University of Tennessee Health Science Center and the University of California San Diego School of Medicine.

### Featuring nationally and internationally recognized experts:

Michael Lawton, MD | Adnan Siddiqui, MD, PhD | J Mocco, MD, MS  
Johanna Fifi, MD | Ramesh Grandhi, MD, MS | Adam Arthur, MD, MPH  
Alexander Khalessi, MD, MBA | Andrei Alexandrov, MD | Stephen Davis, MD  
Geoffrey Donnan, MD | Brian Jankowitz, MD | Edward Duckworth, MD, MS  
John Perl II, MD | Lucas Eljovich, MD | Anne Alexandrov, PhD, AGACNP-BC

