

## Alcor Life Extension Foundation Newsletter March 4, 2016



### Welcome to the *Alcor News* - the new News!

Since *Cryonics* magazine has gone from monthly to bi-monthly, we thought it time to restart online newsletters to bring you updates with greater frequency. The deadline for this particular issue is set because we want to give Alcor members a chance to benefit from the \$80 early-registration discount for the RAAD Fest (see below), which is available until March 8. Even without the special discount, the event looks like a great deal, but we don't want you to miss out.

--Max More  
Alcor President & CEO

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

### RAAD Festival

We're at a unique turning point in terms of the plausibility of radical life extension. It's not a new idea, but only now is the science starting to look solid. So this is a critical time for people to come together to learn what is



happening now and to understand how they can make a difference both in their own lives and in the culture at large.

This is the purpose of RAAD Fest, the largest radical life extension event ever, which will be held August 4 - 7th in San Diego, CA. (RAAD stands for "Revolution Against Aging and Death".)

[www.RAADfest.com](http://www.RAADfest.com)

It's not enough to just talk about possibilities. We need to take all possible actions, including improving diet, exercise, and adopting a positive-and-practical attitude (and, of course, cryonics as a critical backup plan). And we need to influence public opinion to drive more research investment in radical life extension. Action now can be the difference between living and dying.

We can't afford to have a passive mentality in which we agree in principle, but don't do anything about it. The stakes are too high. We need to come together to celebrate life and to inspire people to take more steps to live healthier lives now, and to take constructive action in society. There's so much that needs to be done. We need to push for changes in public policy, in corporate research funding, and in personal attitudes and cultural beliefs.

Having this large gathering of people at RAAD Fest makes us more real in people's minds. Big events create buzz. Scientific conferences are important. But combining good science with the celebration of life can energize the radical life extension community, and help spread the word. Unlike typical scientific conferences where you may feel lost in the crowd, this unique event will bring us all closer together, with a range of subjects, entertainment and meals. Speakers include Aubrey de Grey, Greg Fahy, Bill Faloon, Natasha Vita-More, Liz Parrish, Ray Kurzweil, and many others including myself representing cryonics at Alcor. Healthy lunches and dinners are included in the registration fee to allow for productive times together throughout the program. Don't miss this historic event.

When you go to [www.RAADfest.com](http://www.RAADfest.com), you'll see a REGISTER button to click a little way down the Home Page. You'll then see an early registration fee of \$427. Alcor members need not pay that price. As you are near completing your registration, including meal selections, you'll see a "Coupon" box. Just enter **ALCOR** into that box and you'll immediately see your price drop to \$347. (This special discount is available only until **March 8, 2016**.)

AVAILABLE UNTIL **MARCH 8TH**  
USE PROMO CODE **ALCOR** FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$80 DISCOUNT

**LEARN**  
Learn the latest scientific advancements and gain vital insights to extend your health and well-being.

**CONNECT**  
You're not alone. Connect in person with fellow enthusiasts, be heard, and build our voice in this world.

**GET EMPOWERED**  
Become a more empowered and effective advocate and interact with leaders of radical life extension.

**CELEBRATE**  
Celebrate the culture of radical life extension through visual, musical and performing arts.

NUMEROUS PRESENTERS INCLUDE:

Ray Kurzweil, Natasha Vita-More, Liz Parrish, Greg Fahy, Bill Faloon, Aubrey de Grey, and many others.

SPONSORED BY: **LifeExtension** | **PEOPLE UNLIMITED**

Register at: [www.RAADFest.com](http://www.RAADFest.com)

(408) 941.6850 | [info@lifecoalition.com](mailto:info@lifecoalition.com)

## Conference Photos

We would like to reach out to any members who attended the conference and have good quality photos they would like to submit. Please send your photos to Marji Klima at [marji@alcor.org](mailto:marji@alcor.org).

## Membership Update

Early in 2015, I set a goal for the year of achieving a growth rate higher than in any previous year since I became president five years ago - and also at any time over the last ten years. Three-quarters of the way through last year, the recent drop in membership due to clearing a backlog of terminations made this more difficult but still within sight.

We did it! As noted by Diane Cremeens, Alcor's tireless Membership Department Coordinator, we also broke the record for incoming applicants, which was 140 new ones submitted, with 97

Full Members finalized for the year 2015. So, despite terminations and cancellations (some of whom are individuals who may return when their finances improve), we achieved a net gain of 44 members and a growth rate of 4.36%. (In 2010, the year before I became CEO, we grew at 2.0%. In 2011 at 2.9%.)

In 2015, cryopreservation membership grew from 1,010 to 1,054, or 4.36%. (As of today, the number is 1,062.) Associate Members grew from 144 to 197, which is 36.8%. Total members (including patients) grew from 1,287 to 1,394 = 8.31%. Looking further ahead into my sixth year as president, I see encouraging signs that this acceleration should continue. Did this growth come at the cost of draining the pool of applicants? On the contrary, through 2015 applicants in the queue up from 54 to 79.

Back in 2013, membership actually shrank slightly, perhaps as a result of poor economic conditions and previous increases in membership dues. The economy has been recovering and Alcor has reduced dues for three years in a row. We know that we lost a few members to Cryonics Institute but that tide has turned. Six CI members have switched to Alcor just in the last 7 months. Welcome to you, and congratulations on understanding the difference in value.

It should be noted that other cryonics organizations count "members" differently. If you look at some sources, including Wikipedia and some organization's own websites, you will find misleading numbers that fail to distinguish between what we call "members" - those who have full contractual and financial arrangements for cryopreservation, from others who are either little more than subscribers or who have plans to store cell samples or pets but who lack arrangements to cryopreserve themselves. There is nothing wrong with having different levels of membership, but like should be compared with like. This is now difficult because, during 2015, CI removed the column showing the number of full cryopreservation members. The fact remains that Alcor has around twice as many cryopreservation members as the next largest cryonics organization.

## New LED lights in the PCB

The old fluorescent lights high up in the Patient Care Bay were difficult to replace, unreliable, and gave poor illumination. We have almost finished replacing them with new LED lights. The LEDs use only a fraction of the power, last longer, and produce much better, brighter light (5500K color temperature).

## Board Meeting Changes

Some of you who have been members for over 20 to 30 years may remember the interminably long board meetings, attended by many people, that were common in Southern California. These could run for four, five, or even six hours. These days, we rarely reach three hours, but this is still a lot of time for busy people. We have also found that the structure of the meetings - where we spend much time going through each staff member's board report, and where discussion of almost all topics is public - is inefficient and prevents us from diving more deeply into the most significant issues. The board and I have agreed to make some changes:

First of all, I have been chairing the meetings by default, but we now have a formal chair from among the directors: James Clement. I am happy to pass on to James much of the load of meeting organizing and wrangling.

Second, each meeting will continue to begin as an open, public meeting. During that part of the meeting, board reports will be covered but much more briefly. Board meetings will generally now be on the second Saturday of the month (March being an exception, being scheduled for March 19), so that staff will have sufficient time to prepare board reports further in advance (by the Tuesday prior to the meeting). Most questions and comments on the reports can then be handled by email, saving much time at meetings.

Third, the chair has been charged with more aggressively cutting off conversations that are straying from the point and noting them down as possible future agenda items.

Fourth, the chair will decide which agenda items will be discussed in public session and which in closed session. If you call in for board meetings, you may find the length of the public portion may be as short as ten minutes or as long as a couple of hours.

## Three recent cryopreservations

After a 3.5 month break from cryopreservations, we had two cases in the second half of December, the last being just before the new year. On November 25, we heard from Tim Gibson, Alcor member and main force behind Cryonics-UK about Cormac Seachoy, a young man in Bristol, England with terminal abdominal cancer who wanted to sign up but had been told he had only about three weeks to live. (This turned out to be just about exactly right.) With support from his family, he was able to complete the paperwork and finances were in place on December 9. We had planned to move him from England to Scottsdale via air ambulance. When that was no longer workable, Aaron Drake prepared to fly to his location and perform standby, stabilization, and field cryoprotection with the assistance of Tim (who was the only member of C-UK available).

However, Cormac was declining rapidly on the 16th and arrested before Aaron could arrive. Tim carried out the stabilization and transport to London essentially solo (with some help from long-term Alcor member Garret Smyth, who drove from London to Bristol). Aaron arrived in London in time to improve the cannulation, complete cryoprotection, and see the patient begin cooling to dry ice temperature. Cormac (our 141st) is now at liquid nitrogen temperature at Alcor. You can find the Case Summary here:

<http://www.alcor.org/blog/a-2878-cormac-seachoy-case-summary-patient-142/>

This was quickly followed by the unexpectedly rapid decline of Mark Lee Miller, a recently-signed up member with ALS in California. On December 28, medical providers suggested he had roughly 2 weeks remaining, or less. In fact, Mark arrested almost exactly as the new year began at midnight. As a whole body patient arresting on what was a long weekend without warning, we faced many difficulties. Thanks to the quick response by our partner, Suspended Animation, along with a crucial role played by a long-term Alcor advisor, the patient benefited from stabilization and washout, with cryoprotection of the brain following at Alcor a little over 12 hours after arrest in California.

Our most recent case, (neuro) member A-1700, took place in late January (date of pronouncement being January 25). We were not notified of a serious medical event by his family, nor of his clinical death. After learning about it from other sources the following day, we immediately took possession of the patient (who was being kept just above freezing in a hospital morgue) and were able to perform a field cryoprotection, cool down to dry ice, and then transport to Alcor.

In all three cases, CT scans done of were done of the patients' brains. It turns out that, in some cases, we can CT scan a whole body patient.

## Recent Media

We had enjoyed an enormous amount of media coverage since my last update. For more

details, see my CEO Update in the forthcoming issue of *Cryonics*.

During September and October of 2015, we received a great deal of press attention, most of which resulted from previous cryopreservations, especially that of Kim Suozzi (sparked by a 7,000 word story in *The New York Times* by Amy Harmon, with accompanying video), and our first Chinese patient, Du Hong, but also another burst of stories on Matheryn from Thailand. Ms. Harmon's piece, "A Dying Young Woman's Hope in Cryonics and a Future" in the September 12 2015 issue of *The New York Times* was heartfelt and accompanied by a moving 13-minute video. This story was either reprinted or published in another form in *The Boston Globe*, *The Seattle Times*, *Alternet*, *Tech Insider*, and *MSN*.

Matheryn's story was covered by multiple outlets, including "Frozen child: The youngest person to be cryogenically preserved" by the BBC on October 15, 2015, as well as Channel 9 news in Australia. Our patient cryopreserved in China, Du Hong, also received considerable publicity, including the *Daily Mail's* "Deceased sci-fi editor had her brain frozen in hope of 'resurrection' when science catches up".

The science supporting cryonics has been highlighted and debated more intensely than ever in the latter part of 2015 and the start of 2016. Some of this was sparked by *The New York Times* piece, such as "The False Science of Cryonics", which appeared in *MIT Technology Review* on September 15, 2015 by neuroscientist Michael Hendricks. A powerful rebuttal by David W. Crippen, Robert J. Shmookler Reis, Ramon Risco, and Natasha Vita-More, "The Science Surrounding Cryonics: What the nervous system of the roundworm, frozen embryos, and extreme hypothermia tell us about preserving the mind" appeared in the same publication on October 19, 2015.

If you attended the Alcor-2015 conference, you probably saw a presentation by Robert McIntyre on aldehyde-stabilized cryopreservation (ASC). Robert had told us some time ago that he was sure he was going to win the Brain Preservation Foundation's Small Mammal Prize. He was proven right in February 2016 when his team was awarded that prize. The press release set off a massive wave of publicity and discussion of his result and its implications for cryonics practice. You will find some discussion of this elsewhere in this issue. The story appeared, among other places, in *The Huffington Post* ("Cryogenically Frozen Rabbit Brain Hailed As Scientific First"); *Newsweek* ("Rabbit Brain Returns Successfully from Cryopreservation"); *New Scientist* ("Mammal brain frozen and thawed out perfectly for first time"); *Slashgear*; *Tech Times* ("Frozen Rabbit Brain Successfully Preserved Without Damage Through New Cryonics Method"); *The Daily Mail*; *Gizmodo* ("Brain Preservation Breakthrough Could Usher in a New Era in Cryonics"); *Futurism.com*; *Science Recorder*; *Digital Trends*; and several forums on Reddit. Previously-harsh skeptic Michael Shermer took a very different and more positive position in "**Afterlife for Atheists**" in the February issue of *Scientific American*.

Dozens of other cryonics stories have appeared in recent months, often in widely-circulated publications. Just a small sampling: "Dying is the last thing anyone wants to do - so keep cool and carry on", in *The Guardian*, October 10, 2015; "Brain Freeze: Can putting faith in cryonics deliver life after death?" in *The Canadian Press*, October 4, 2015; "How to Live Forever" in *Shortlist* in January; and "How the New Science of Freezing Can Save Your Life" in *Outside Online*.

Alcor appeared in the UK's *Financial Times*, for which we were interviewed on October 11 with photos shot on November 10. The main focus of this was the *c. elegans* research by Natasha Vita-More. On November 13, I gave a tour for an Argentinian journalist for *Clarín* Newspaper. The article will be published in their Sunday magazine, *VIVA*, published in Spain, one of the most widely read newspapers in Spanish-language. A lengthy piece appeared in the November 23rd issue of *The New Yorker*. This looked in detail at the work of Alcor member Nick Bostrom.

*The Verge* published a series of six pieces, one of which focused specifically on cryonics, although the topic appeared in one or two of the others also. In the science section of the rebooted *Omni* online magazine, Esther Kim asked: "How Far Are We From Successful Cryonics" And in the popular *Gizmodo*, George Dvorsky's "The Most Futuristic Predictions That Came True In 2015" highlighted Alcor's cryopreservation of our youngest-ever patient.

In addition to print media, over the last few months, we have hosted numerous news and film crews. So far, almost all of the resulting coverage has proven predominantly positive and helpful to us. Local coverage includes stories by channel 3, channel 10, channel 12, and Fox News. In October, I also spoke with a reporter from the Cronkite News Service in Phoenix, which is a student journalist outlet connected with ASU. You can find local news coverage from February 24th [here](#).

On Sunday November 22, Alcor was featured in the last episode of the PBS science documentary, *The Brain with David Eagleman*. I think the episode was well done and Alcor and cryonics were treated with respect, leaving a positive impression. (Eagleman is a neuroscientist at the Baylor College of Medicine.) The full episode can be downloaded from PBS.

On January 12, I spend some time filming for *National Geographic*. This is a prestigious publication and related video channel, and all indications are that we will be treated well. I talked to a reporter from the UK's *New Scientist*, who is covering Timeship but also wants to include 2-4 pages on Alcor. The reported seemed very interested and sympathetic.

I spent considerable time on my feet shooting numerous takes and different angles for a documentary by *Leftfield Pictures* in collaboration with the rap artist GZA (formerly of the Wu Tang Clan, for those of us familiar with that genre). This was a request that I initially turned down but Marji looked into the production company more closely and suggested I take another look. I was especially curious about GZA (pronounced "giz-uh", and pleasantly surprised and impressed by his clear and strong commitment to promoting science education among young people. As he left, he said that he would like to discuss the ideas we had covered further.

I spoke with a journalist from Australian's Channel 7 for the show *Sunday Night Seven Network*, which claims to be "Australia's most-watched premier public affairs and documentary programme, and the network's flagship national programme." We also did filming for a South Korean documentary, and for Xinhua, "the most important Chinese news service"; the UK's Channel 4 (*ITN Productions*). Cryonics was a subplot in an episode of the medical ER drama, *Code Black*, in early February.

## Alcor Membership Information and Enrollment Instructions

### Associate Membership

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Alcor Life Extension Foundation | 1-877-462-5267 | [www.alcor.org](http://www.alcor.org)

STAY CONNECTED:

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