

2009 SIEM Magic Quadrant

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Eric Mead and Apollo Robbins Perform – So We Heard

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So, we're hanging out at the *Annual Society for*

Neuroscience Meeting in our hometown of Chicago, Illinois.

We didn't get a program until we opened our goody bag during the first seminar on Saturday morning.

We were listening to Dr. Tracy Bale from the University of Pennsylvania give a talk entitled *Oh, Behave! Genes, the Epigenome, and Other Tales of Regulation*.

Now, we don't know your position on the whole Epigenome issue and we're not here to preach our position as superior but suffice it to say we think one day behaviorists and geneticists will again work together. Sure, it may not be in our lifetime but the time is coming.

Anyway, the Epigenome lecture was the first of three or four in the second session Saturday morning.

We didn't want to be rude by leaving after the first speaker so we stayed for the full bill.

We enjoyed the GABAergic inhibitory neurons discussion but who wouldn't.

If you care at all about getting past the "roadblock" that is the heterogeneity of GABAergic cell, this was your kind of lecture.

And while it's not rocket science, let's not kid ourselves, dissecting the complexity of the GABA neurons – even with today's modern mouse genetic engineering and viral gene assisted visualization tools – is no picnic.

It was nice to hear we weren't the only ones having trouble isolating GABA neurons generally; much less in a mouse.

Misery loves company, we guess.

So, the GABAergic lecture ends and we check the program for the next event.

Dang!

We read that Eric Mead and Apollo Robbins will be performing as part of a lecture on way across town over at the McCormick Place. The lecture sounded fantastic: *Dialogues Between Neuroscience and Society Magic, the Brain, and the Mind*.

We practically dove down the escalator to the lobby of the Hyatt Regency and flew to the area where attendees can catch the shuttle bus.

There was an incredible line of scientists and neuroscience groupies like us waiting for the next bus.

We ran across to the sidewalk and about two blocks looking for a taxi.

Who would have thought it would be tough to find a taxi at lunch hour outside a busy hotel in Chicago?

We thought about cutting in front of the attendees waiting to board the next shuttle but realized that would be both rude and unproductive.

The scientists wouldn't care about the rude part – they're know rude, they have to answer to deans.

No, the delay would come from the scientists trying to figure out why we did what we did.

Was it genetic, behavioral, irrational, aberrant?

See how nice it will be when the Epigenome is here?

Anyway, we missed the show/lecture and were depressed. We heard almost a thousand scientists made it to the event and everyone loved it. Here are some highlights from the *USA Today* article.

Mr. Mead and Mr. Robbins were trying to show how the mind accepts or attempts to deal with deception.

"We are trying to develop with magicians an understanding of how they manipulate awareness, how they apply insights about cognition and perception to do that," says Stephen Macknik, director of the Laboratory of Behavioral Neurophysiology at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, a conference presenter on the topic. "We want to poach their powers and use them to increase brain discovery."

Dr. Macknik said there are great similarities between Behavioral Neurophysiologists and magicians.

"Magicians basically do the same things we try to do in the lab but they do it on stage for thousands of people. It's an incredibly robust version of what we're doing in the lab," he told the *USA Today*.

Well, we didn't get to see it. We did get great seats for the 1:00 lecture back at the Hyatt but the presenter did not perform a single trick; not even a flourish.

What a rip-off! You would think people who design mazes test rats would figure out a way to let attendees go from one lecture to another or at least give us cheese to ease the pain.

The closest we came to cheese was found in our shoes after our taxi dash.

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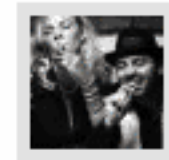
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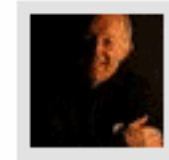
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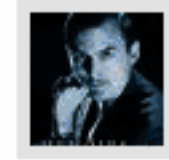
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