

Message from the Program Officer

Stacia Sower

By all accounts, the January 2003 SICB Annual Meeting in Toronto was a great success. Martin Feder, Past-President of SICB, began the meeting as the opening session speaker on "Scienomics" as the Future of Integrative and Comparative Biology, attracting a large and receptive audience. We had an outstanding array of well-attended symposia, contributed oral and poster presentations, special lectures, workshops, get-togethers, and socials. In addition, due to now-Past President Marvalee Wake's goal of increasing our international perspective, this meeting included one official Canadian Society of Zoology symposium and two divisional symposia that were co-sponsored with CSZ.

Marvalee Wake was President during 2002 as I was beginning my tenure as Program Officer. Marvalee was an outstanding President who provided boundless energy and vision for SICB. She was terrific in her support and assisting me as Program Officer and I thank her now. I also thank Ron Dimock, John Pearse and Penny Hopkins for their excellent input and assistance. I very much look forward to working with our new officers this year.

The success of the Toronto meeting was due of course to all of the outstanding contributions and presentations of the presenters and also due to Sue Burk, Lori Strong, and the rest of the staff of Burk Associates, Inc. Sue and Lori and their staff and volunteer students attention endless details was indispensable for the smooth running of the meeting. I want to publicly express my thanks also with our webmaster Ruedi Birenheide who helped with so many of the program items on the web and helped develop the PDF and SICB agenda that was available before the meeting.

As I stated in the fall newsletter, my goals are to promote programs and symposia to enhance the concepts of integrative and comparative biology, to maintain strong divisional structure and to integrate leading edge symposia and speakers. In order to accomplish these goals and to strive towards new programs and initiatives, and with the assistance and input of Sue Burk and others of Burk Associates, Ruedi Birenheide (SICB webmaster), and Executive Committee and Divisional Program Officers, we have now implemented new ideas and ways of programming. One of these ideas was the development of the web page for promoting and encouraging submission of proposals on the web. This process allows among others more general input from the Executive Committee, Program Advisory Committee, Divisional Program Officers and past officers to help provide advice and long-range planning. Decisions for symposia are now made over a year in advance allowing the symposium organizers to have time to prepare their symposia and to apply for funding. The selected symposia for the 2004 SICB Annual Meeting in New Orleans can be found at:
<http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2004/index.php3>

Kate Loudon, Program Officer-Elect, is now actively working on symposia for the 2005 San Diego Meetings. The call for symposia is on the SICB web page with the deadline of Aug 15, 2003.

At the Toronto meeting, due to large input from members, we changed the poster times from evenings to the posters being up for two days with viewing times at lunch and having box lunch available. Our now annual Program Meeting of DPOs and POs and Burk Associates had decided this in the fall prior to the meeting. There were still too many conflicts and not enough time for the posters. With input provided from the membership and from the Executive Committee, it was agreed that we move the time for the poster to the afternoons and not have any meetings or symposium scheduled during the poster times. Posters are an invaluable part of the meeting not only for presentation of the science but also as a venue for interacting and discussing ideas with colleagues.

New this year for SICB Programming and Continuing or Changes for 2004:

1. We have now added an annual program meeting in early Fall of each year to fully develop a comprehensive and cohesive program. This meeting includes all the divisional program officers, SICB program officer, past Program Officer and Meeting Director and Assistant Director (Burk Associates). Our first meeting was Sept 28 and 29, 2002 in Toronto and it was an outstanding success and it has been agreed to continue these annual program meetings.
2. We have provided the program and grid as PDF for perusal before the meeting.
3. We have developed a web page for promoting and encouraging submission of proposals of symposium. This process allows among others more general input from the Executive Committee, Program Advisory Committee, Divisional Program Officers and past officers to help provide advice and long-range planning. Decisions for symposia are now made over a year in advance allowing the symposium organizers to have time to prepare their symposia and to apply for funding.
4. 2003: Posters were at noon and were up for two days (instead of one day) with box lunches provided.
2004: Posters will be scheduled for every afternoon with no scheduled oral presentations or symposia and will be up for one day and a half with no posters on the final day.
5. Development of a web page for promoting and encouraging nominations for opening session speaker. This process allows input from the membership at large.
6. Symposium: We are now requiring all symposium organizers to develop a web page (simple or elaborate or in-between) by September prior to the meeting. This will allow the members to know well in advance of registration, the upcoming symposia; will assist the Committee on Public Affairs; and will help promote the activities of SICB. Ruedi, our incredible webmaster, has offered his assistance to Symposium organizers.

I look forward to seeing everyone in New Orleans in Jan 2004.

Stacia Sower
Society Program Officer