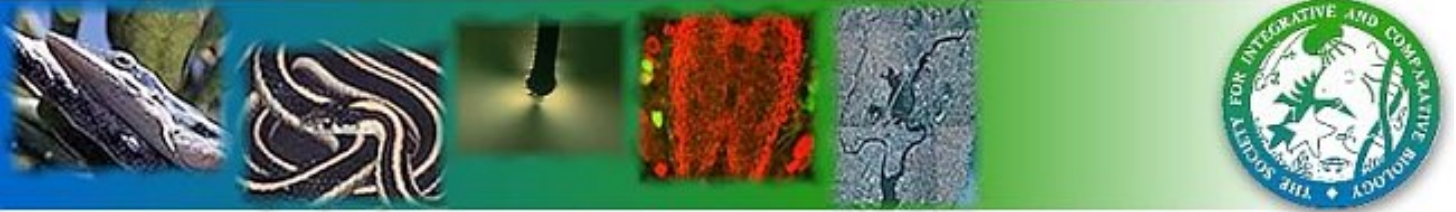


SICB Newsletter



Volume Spring 2005

Division of Comparative Physiology & Biochemistry (DCPB): 2005 Spring Newsletter

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Message from the Chair

Donna L. Wolcott

If you went to the SICB meetings in San Diego this January for the balmy weather, you were sadly disenchanted, no doubt! If you went with high expectations for the scientific content, then you were not disappointed. And if you didn't go, you missed excellent symposia and sessions, and good interactions with colleagues. In particular, the Bartholomew Award lecture by Nicole King (UCB), "The Unicellular Ancestry of Metazoa", elicited much response from many different disciplines, and was attended by about 500 people. Since our social followed directly on the lecture, it was well attended too, which extended the opportunity to discuss comparative topics, including comparative genomics, renew acquaintances, and meet new scientists. (And unlike last year, we did not run out of food while most of the folks were still in line, thanks to the efforts of Burk and Associates, business managers for the Society.) I am looking forward to the scientific buffet in 2006 in Orlando, Florida (January 4–8).

In behalf of the Division, I'd like to offer special thanks to Lou Burnett for serving as the SICB representative on both the US National Committee, which organizes IUPS congresses (most recent one just this March in San Diego), and on the governing body that organizes ICCPB congresses (coming in 2007 to Brazil). While these two congresses are completely separate, it has been traditional for practical reasons (e.g., rationalizing symposium offerings) to have a single representative from SICB to work with both congresses. Working with planning and organizing international congresses that occur infrequently has particular challenges, and without Lou's attention to timelines and impending deadlines, as well as his input on content, the comparative aspect of both Congresses would be diminished. Lou has served DCPB long and well as a past program officer and division chair, and we appreciate his willingness to represent the division to the USNC and ICCPB for another term. Thanks also to Nora Terwilliger and Malcolm Gordon for their efforts increase the visibility of comparative physiology at the IUPS meetings this March.

I would also like to publicly thank Ross Ellington, chair of the George A. Bartholomew Award committee in 2004. Ross organized the application and review process so that the necessary short turn around between the application deadline and the award announcement could be accommodated without sacrificing a thorough review and good exchange among the committee members. Selecting one awardee from among the eleven excellent candidates was challenging, and I encourage those in that applicant pool to reapply.

David Tapley, organizer for the DCPB Best Student Paper and Poster competition, also deserves the thanks of all in the division. We had 40 entries, each of which required multiple judges. It proved especially difficult in San Diego. Nevertheless, David has agreed to do this again –his third such service– in Orlando next year. When David contacts YOU next summer, please respond positively so that judging does not become a burden for any one division member. Being able to provide input into young investigators' scientific formation and to provide recognition of excellence is a solid investment in the future of the division and in the field of comparative physiology and biochemistry.

And lastly, thanks to Michael Dickinson for his excellent service to DCPB and SICB as division program officer over the last several years (see Hammond's message to follow).

On a more somber note, it is with profound respect that we mark the passing of Dr. Dorothy Skinner, who died February 12, 2005 after a long illness. Dorothy served the Society and the Division without stint, and was a wonderful mentor to those who passed through her lab, or who benefited from her wise counsel and spirited exchanges at scientific meetings. A scholarship fund is being established in memory of Dorothy Skinner; see the tribute to Dorothy that follows below.

Tribute to Dorothy Skinner

Don Mykles, Colorado State University

**Dorothy M. Skinner
(1930–2005)**

Dorothy Skinner died on February 12, 2005 from complications of Parkinson's disease. We have not only lost a prominent member of our community, but also an influential mentor and advocate for women in science. Her declining health over the last decade prevented her from pursuing these passions more vigorously.

Dorothy was tenacious and fiercely competitive, attributes that manifested early. She was born in Newton, Massachusetts, as the youngest of three girls. She graduated from Watertown High School, where she was Best Girl Athlete. At Tufts University she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year and was on the women's basketball team. After earning her B.A. (Biology and Chemistry) in 1952, she was Assistant Dean of Admissions at Tufts for two years. The Dean being unwell, at age 23 Dorothy was given the chief responsibility for admitting two classes to the School of Arts and Sciences. Of this experience she said: "I learned to be perceptive, to listen, to try to guide others in making important career decisions."

It was as a Ph.D. student at Harvard University (1954–1958) that she began her interest in crustaceans. She was the last of John Welsh's "Three Dots", whom he advised as graduate students in the 1950's. The others were Dorothy F. Travis and Dorothy E. Bliss. After postdoctoral positions in the biochemistry departments at Harvard, Yale, and Brandeis, she joined the faculty at New York University School of Medicine in 1962. In 1966, she and her husband, John Cook, took positions as senior research scientists in the Biology Division of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where they worked in their respective fields until retirement more than 30 years later.

At Oak Ridge, she introduced molecular approaches to the investigation of numerous crustacean species. As an authority on satellite DNA structure and function, she was a pioneer in the field of genomics and was quick to utilize the tools of molecular biology. Her keen intellect and powers of observation led to important discoveries in molting biology. She was the first to describe induction of molting by multiple leg removal (autotomy) and inhibition of molting by autotomy of regenerating limbs. She rediscovered the phenomenon of premolt atrophy of claw muscle and recognized its significance in facilitating withdrawal from the exoskeleton at ecdysis.

Dorothy authored nearly 90 publications, including articles in *Nature*, *Science*, *Cell*, and *PNAS*. A lasting legacy is her chapter on molting and regeneration in **The Biology of Crustacea** published 20 years ago. It remains the most complete and thorough review of the field to this day. Her many contributions were recognized with a symposium at the 1998 annual meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology in Boston (*American Zoologist*, volume 39, number 3). In 1994 The Crustacean Society honored Dorothy with an Award for Excellence in Research for a "lifetime of investigative achievements and for mentoring new trainees in the field." Other honors were a Scholar–Athlete Award from Tufts (1993) and the Distinguished Service Award from the Tufts Alumni Association (1994).

Her other professional activities included serving on the editorial boards of **The Biological Bulletin**, **Gene**, **Growth**, and **Physiological Zoology** and review panels for the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. She also was an officer in several scientific societies, including North American Governor of The Crustacean Society. Several summers she taught at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Throughout her life she devoted much effort to promoting the equal treatment of women in science and was elected to the governing council of the Association for Women in Science.

She and her husband developed an interest in 20th century art and filled their home with a substantial collection of paintings, prints, and sculptures. After retirement, she and John moved to Falmouth, Massachusetts in 1999. Condolences can be addressed to: Dr. John Cook, 24 Gray Lane, Falmouth, MA 02540–1613.

A scholarship fund is being established in memory of Dorothy Skinner. It will provide travel support for women graduate students and postdocs to present their research at the SICB meetings. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Don Mykles (Donald.Mykles@ColoState.edu).



Message from the Program Officer

Kimberly Hammond

Farewell and Thanks!

The first item this spring is to thank Michael Dickinson whom I am replacing for his service to the society for the past two years and, on a personal note, for giving me a very good primer on my duties as program officer. Michael helped to plan many diverse and wonderful symposia. I trust he will continue his leadership in our division and in SICB as a whole over the next few years.

San Diego: By all accounts the San Diego meeting was a great success. Congratulations to Dr. Nicole King, who received this year's Bartholomew Award. Also we thank James Truman who gave the Howard Bern Lecture. We are privileged indeed to be able to honor the likes of Bart and Howard each year.

Both of the symposia sponsored by the Division of Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry were successful and drew a lot of outside attention. Many thanks are in order for the organizers of these two symposia. For "Desiccation Tolerance in Animals, Microbes, and Plants: Comparative Mechanisms and Evolution" we thank Peter Albert, Jim Clegg, Brent Mishler, and Mel Oliver. Robert Dudley and Doug Altschuler organized the symposium (co-sponsored with DVM) entitled "Adaptations for Life at High Elevation" and we thank them as well.

Orlando: Our next meeting is in Orlando Florida. The dates are: January 4–8. We look forward to many great talks and symposia. The Society– wide symposia are:

"Ecological Immunology: Recent Advances and Applications for Conservation and Public Health" organized by Kelly Lee, Bram Lutton and Martin Wikelski

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"Metamorphosis: A Multi–Kingdom Approach" organized by Andreas Heyland, Jason Hodin, Cory Bishop, and Leonid Moroz

The Division of Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry is sponsoring or co–sponsoring the following symposia:

"Genomic and Proteomic Approaches in Crustacean Biology" organized by Donald Mykles and David Towle (with The Crustacean Society, DIZ and DNB)

"EcoPhysiology and Conservation: The contributions Contributions of Energetics" organized by Robert Stevenson (with DCE and DEE)

"Biomechanics and Neuromuscular Control" organized by Kiisa Nishikawa and Andrew Biewener (with DVM and DNB)

It is never too soon to start thinking of ideas for symposia for future meetings. The symposia are a good way to introduce new and provocative ideas, or discuss changing themes in research, or revisit and revitalize other areas. Please email me (khammond@ucr.edu) to get started.

Other Meetings: DCPB/SICB is co–sponsoring the International Congress for Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry (ICCPB) in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil in August 2007. We have been soliciting ideas for symposia at those meetings, and we are hoping many SICB members will plan to attend.

Finally, I want to congratulate, on behalf of the Division of Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry the graduate student award winners at our 2005 meeting. See the Message from the Graduate Student/Postdoc Representative later in this newsletter.

Congratulations for jobs well done!

Message from the Secretary

Paul H. Yancey

MINUTES OF THE DCPB BUSINESS MEETING, January 5, 2005, San Diego

Paul Yancey (Secretary) presented the minutes from the DCPB Business meeting in New Orleans, January 2004. The minutes were approved unanimously. He then announced that the division secretaries were seeking photos from members to feature on the SICB divisional websites.

Donna Wolcott (Chair) then called on Steven Vogel, who announced an AAAS initiative with NSF funding called BEN (Bioscience Education Network):

www.biosciencednet.org/portal/

The BEN website will serve as a source of peer–reviewed, no–fee instructional materials for undergraduate biology teaching. SICB is joining BEN with an initial site on Biomechanics:

sicb.org/dl/biomechanics.php3

A site on Environmental Endocrinology is under development. Members are encouraged to submit ideas and materials. SICB Webmaster Ruediger Birenheide noted that online materials can be rtf files, movies, url links, etc.

Donna then recognized SICB President John Wingfield, who introduced the SICB officers. He also announced that NSF is greatly decreasing its funding of symposia. He also noted that SICB revenues are falling, primarily due to declining journal subscriptions. Finally, he discussed an increasing interest in Conservation Biology among several divisions, and that SICB officers were pondering how to address this.

Bill Zamer of NSF announced a new section called Integrative Organismal Biology (IOB). Biologists interested in submitted proposals to IOB should look at the new website and contact program officers about suitability. He then discussed the bad news: a 4–5% cut in NSF budget, with another cut likely in fiscal year 2006. Funding for symposia is indeed being heavily cut, in order to preserve funding for regular grants as much as possible. Bill emphasized that NSF is still in business and expects proposal submissions.

Donna then introduced the DCPB officers, including our new Chair–Elect, Pat Walsh, and Program–Officer–Elect, Kimberly Hammond.

Michael Dickinson (Program Officer) then reported on symposia of interest to DCPB at SICB 2006. See *Message from the Program Officer* in this newsletter for more information (from our new officer, Kimberly Hammond). He also emphasized the need for judges in the best paper competition. Dave Tapley does an outstanding job, but is finding it increasingly difficult to get such judges. DCPB may have to devise some way of restricting the number of eligible papers, or of recruiting more judges. Rich Londraville, who coordinated the judges at the meeting this year, noted that each judge had to attend 8 to 12 papers, which is too much.

Donna announced that an online chat board will be set up for exchange of ideas. One issue is whether students who compete for best paper should be members of DCPB. SICB Program officer Catherine Loudon noted that there is in fact a proposal to amend the bylaws to allow non–members to participate. DCPB Past President Nora Terwilliger argued that divisions do matter, and that we should instead make it easier for students to affiliate with a division. [*For members' input on this issue, see the section below on ONLINE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE BYLAWS CHANGE.*]

Pat Walsh, editor of *CPB (Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology)*, reported on the journal's 2004 activities.

1. Submissions Statistics:

- ◆ Submissions: 901 (38 still in process)
- ◆ Referees Used: 1351 (some more than once)
- ◆ Desk/Editorial Board Rejections: 27.2%; Rejections after review: 18.8%; Total Rejections: 46.0%
- ◆ 2003 Impact Factors: ~1.5 for Parts A,B and C
- ◆ Turnaround Time: 11 weeks + revisions

2. Miscellaneous items

- ◆ Electronic Review, including referee query by mid–February 2005
- ◆ We take papers in Open Office (open source) File Format
- ◆ Elsevier has changed interpretation of copyright agreement such that authors can post pdf files of proofs to individual webpages for downloading
- ◆ We still encourage downloads of papers from Science Direct
- ◆ We track and give "Atta Boy/Girl" kudos to the top 25 downloaded papers each year

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3. Special Issues for 2004–05

- ◆ PWH Peter Hochachka Memorial–George Somero, Guest Editor
- ◆ Aquatic Animal Models of Human Health–Mike Schmale, Guest Editor
- ◆ Ontogeny of Physiological Regulation–Steve Roberts and Carl Reiber, Guest Editors (in process)

4. Special Issues for 2005–06

- ◆ Nitric Oxide–Tobias Wang, Guest Editor
- ◆ South and Central American Comp. Physiology: Hermes–Lima and Zenteno–Savin, Guest Editors
- ◆ Comparative Neuroendocrinology: Vance Trudeau, Guest Editor

5. Launch of Part D – Comparative Genomics/Proteomics

- ◆ 3 to 4 issues/year (no added cost)
- ◆ Added Board Members
- ◆ Upcoming: Fugu Genomics Conference (Japan); Guest Editors: Watabe, Johnston, Elgar
- ◆ Now Inviting Papers

6. Elsevier Young Investigator Awards

- ◆ Spring SEB Meeting: Jonathan Stecyk (and two honorable mentions)

Albert Bennett stood in for Jim Hicks, editor of *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology (PBZ)*, to report on that journal.

- ◆ 2004 submissions were at the 2003 level (180–200 per year). 51% were accepted; only 33% were from the U.S.A.
- ◆ Turnaround time is decreasing, now about 63 days for first editorial decision.
- ◆ PBZ has been named by ISI as a "high-impact" journal, with a 2-year impact factor of 1.54 (compared to *AJP-Regulatory* at 3.63, *JEB* at 2.27, *CBP* at 1.55, *JCP* at 1.48. PBZ's 10-year impact factor is about 19 (compared to *CBP* at 8, *JEB* at 20).
- ◆ Two special collections were published, including the November–December issue on endothermy.
- ◆ In 2005, papers will now be published almost as soon as galley proofs are returned.
- ◆ There is now a PBZ website for online submissions and reviews, and with classic articles available for download:
www.journals.uchicago.edu/PBZ/home.html
- ◆ There are two new Associate Editors, Patricia Schulte and Ted Garland. Several new editorial board members have also been selected (see the PBZ website).

Martin Feder spoke about the Annual Review of Physiology, which has the highest impact factor overall. He handles articles on evolutionary and comparative physiology, which members are encouraged to submit.

Donna then discussed the SICB Diversity Committee, which has been ad hoc but will become a standing committee. There should be a ballot on this (for amending the bylaws) in the Spring 2005 SICB newsletter. She noted that we need a new publisher for *Integrative and Comparative Biology*. Finally she presented the venues for upcoming meetings: 2006 in Orlando, 2007 possibly in Tucson, 2008 possibly in San Antonio, and 2009 perhaps in Puerto Rico.

Announcements were then made about the IUPS 2005 meeting in April. Nora noted that SICB gave \$5000 for comparative symposia and for travel for young and foreign investigators. Malcolm Gordon called attention to the satellite symposium on Biomechanics and Bio-inspired Engineering. Lou Burnett listed the Krogh lecture (Ray Weber) and comparative symposia (e.g., on hypoxia, genomics for physiology teaching).

Donna concluded the meeting by announcing the 11th Annual Bart lecture by Nicole King, which followed the meeting, and thanked Sable Systems for contributing financially to the Bart Award prize.

ONLINE DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE BYLAWS CHANGE

An issue brought up at the Business Meeting (see MINUTES, above) is whether we (DCPB) want to change our bylaws to allow students who are not DCPB members to compete in the DCPB best student paper and poster awards. We would need to vote on whether to delete the following sentence from Article XIII. Awards, Section A. Best Student Paper Awards of the bylaws:

A student who applies must be a member of the Division of Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry.

To this end, an online bulletin/chat board has been set up for DCPB members to discuss this issue. Please participate at:

<http://sicb.org/phpBB2/index.php?c=5>

Click on DCPB–BYLAWS link and then read the comments (clicking if necessary). To submit your own comments, click the POST REPLY button, fill out the form, and SUBMIT it.

ELECTIONS

We are holding elections for DCPB Secretary. Electronic ballots will be distributed during the summer. Please be sure to vote. Biographies of the candidates are below:

Secretary Candidates

Adriana D. Briscoe

Current Position: Assistant Professor, Comparative and Evolutionary Physiology Group, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Irvine.

Education: Ph.D., Biology, Harvard University, 1999; M.A. Philosophy, Stanford University; B.S., Biological Sciences, Stanford University, 1993; B.A. Philosophy, Stanford University, 1992

Professional Experience: Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; University of California, Irvine 2002–present; Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Cellular and Structural Biology, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, 2000–2002; Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology, University of Arizona, Tucson, 1999–2000.

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SICB Activities: Member; Student presentation judge for ASP (American Physiological Society); Diversity Committee Panelist; Session Chair; Numerous contributed presentations.

Other Memberships: AAAS; Sigma Xi; Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology; Genetics Society of America; Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution

Research Interests: Evolution of physiological systems, especially sensory systems; comparative functional genomics; color and polarization vision; circadian rhythms; evolution of eyes; vision and behavior.

Statement of Goals: As DCPB Secretary, I will focus my energies on working closely with other DCPB officers, members and the SICB webmaster to communicate and publicize the goals, accomplishments and business of the society through the timely and accurate publication of the DCPB newsletter.

Jonathon H. Stillman

Current Position: Assistant Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Education: B.S. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1991; Ph.D. Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 1999; Postdoctoral Fellow, Johns Hopkins University 2000–2001; Postdoctoral Fellow, Stanford University, 2002–2003

Professional Experience: Visiting Assistant Professor at Occidental College, 2001–2002; Assistant Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa 2003–present

SICB Activities: Member since 1990, 3 posters, 3 oral presentations, symposium speaker for SICB symposium "Physiological Ecology of Rocky Intertidal Organisms: From Molecules to Ecosystems." 2 papers published in *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology*. 2 papers published in *Integrative and Comparative Biology*.

Other Memberships: Sigma Xi, American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Research Interests: I study evolutionary, mechanistic, and ecological aspects of physiological adaptations of organisms to environmental variation and stress. The principal environmental stresses on which my studies focus are those associated with marine intertidal zone habitats. I have examined adaptations to environmental stress within one group of organisms, porcelain crabs, on a wide range of biological levels – from morphological to physiological, biochemical and molecular. My goal is to develop an integrative picture of physiological adaptation, from genomic to the organismal levels. I am currently using a cDNA microarray for porcelain crabs to elucidate the mechanistic bases of thermal acclimation and responses to thermal stress.

Statement of Goals: I would be honored to make a contribution to SICB after many years of SICB/ASZ making a contribution to my scientific career. I first attended during my freshman year as an undergraduate and have attended meetings throughout my graduate, postgraduate, and faculty tenures. The SICB is important to me because of the great balance and diversity among biological disciplines, because of the high caliber of presentations, because of the opportunity for scientific exchange that happens outside of the official sessions, because of the opportunities to make important professional contacts, catch up with old friends and make new ones, and because of the supportive environment for students at all levels (including one junior high school student whom I met while she presented her poster to me in San Diego 2005!, and myself when I was an undergraduate and presented in San Antonio, 1990). I want to do my part to ensure that the society continues to provide these high-quality, well-attended, student-friendly meetings, and to see the society continue to improve in its efforts to integrate the diverse areas of comparative biology.

Message from the Graduate Student/Postdoc Representative

Joanna Joyner Matos

Hello to all DCPB graduate students and postdocs. I hope you enjoyed the meeting in San Diego! Congratulations to the following winners of the DCPB student oral and poster competitions:

Oral presentation

First prize:

Salvante, K.G. of Simon Fraser University for the presentation of Salvante, K.G.; Vezina, F.; Williams, T.D.: Is avian egg production really costly?

Runner-up:

Sponberg, S.N. of UC Berkeley for the presentation of Sponberg, S.N.; Chang, C.; Full, R.J.: Sensory independent, feedforward control of locomotion in cockroaches running over rough surfaces.

Poster presentation

First prize:

Frazier, M. of the University of Washington for the poster, Frazier, M.; Huey, R.B.; Berrigan, D.: Insect population growth: Hotter is Better.

Runner-up:

Hardy, K.M. of University of North Carolina Wilmington for the poster, Hardy, K.M.; Kinsey, S.T.: Effects of fiber size on post-contractile phosphagen resynthesis in crustacean muscle.

As graduate student representative for DCPB, I am also a member of SICB's Student/ Postdoctoral Affairs Committee (SPDAC). The SPDAC has already formulated some plans for activities at the 2006 meeting in Orlando, FL and I would appreciate any feedback on the following ideas. The tentatively planned activities include:

- ◆ 1st Timers Orientation on the first day of the meeting, during which we'll discuss "**How to get the most out of your SICB meeting.**" This meeting will also include a lightning round of 1st timers' questions.
- ◆ SPDAC Free Lunch on the second day of the meeting, during which SPDAC members will introduce themselves and the Student support chair and the president of SICB will discuss student support programs and activities with us.
- ◆ We are planning two workshops for the last evening of the meeting, to be held one after the other (6:00–7:00 and 7:00–8:00).

Workshop #1 is tentatively entitled, "**Optimizing your graduate school experience.**" During this workshop we will discuss topics of interest to graduate students, including acquiring funding, finding a good mentor, applying for grants, getting to meetings and making connections, and building a curriculum vitae.

Workshop #2 is tentatively entitled, "**Strategies for landing an academic job/postdoc.**" For this workshop we will invite new and senior faculty SICB members from each of the three levels of academic institutions. They will discuss how to tailor your curriculum vitae for the different types of academic positions, and summarize the typical research/teaching/service expectations of faculty members at each type of institution. A question and answer period will also be included.

◆ We will end the last evening, of course, with a society-wide social for students and postdocs.

If you have questions or ideas regarding SPDAC's plans for the Orlando meeting, or other questions for me, please feel free to contact me at jjovner@zoo.ufl.edu. Good luck with the semester!

The George A. Bartholomew Award Competition

The Division of Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry solicits applications and nominations for the 2005 George A. Bartholomew Award—an annual prize given to a young investigator for distinguished contributions to comparative physiology and biochemistry or to related fields of functional and integrative biology. Eligible candidates are those who have completed their doctorate within the past seven (7) years. Additional information about the award is available on the SICB website (<http://www.sicb.org/grants/bartholomew.php3>). Candidates may apply directly or be nominated: both types of candidates will be evaluated equivalently. Applicants should submit a short description of their work, three (3) reprints, and a curriculum vitae and also request three letters of recommendation. Nominators must arrange for these same materials (except that only two additional letters of recommendation are required) to be submitted to the Committee. All materials should be submitted electronically in pdf format to the Chair of the Selection Committee, Dr. Steven Hand, Department of Biological Sciences, Louisiana State University (email address: shand@lsu.edu). Deadline for receipt of all materials is Friday, August 26, 2005. The winner will present a Plenary Lecture at the 2006 Annual Meeting in Orlando.

The 2004 George A. Bartholomew Recipient: Nicole King

Nicole King graduated in 1992 with a B.S. in Biology from Indiana University, where Thom Kaufman and Rudy Raff inspired her lasting fascination with the evolution of development. Upon arriving at Harvard University for graduate study, Nicole set out to study the ancestral roles of homeobox genes and was mentored by Andy Knoll and Toby Kellogg. Three years later, with a new appreciation for life's history and microbial diversity, but having made little progress at the bench, Nicole was fortunate to find a new home in the laboratory of Rich Losick. While studying cell-specific gene regulation in a spore-forming bacterium, *Bacillus subtilis*, she learned skills in microbial genetics, biochemistry, microscopy, and comparative genomics that have proven invaluable to her subsequent work. After receiving her Ph.D. in 1999, Nicole migrated to the University of Wisconsin to post-doc in the dynamic laboratory of Sean Carroll. Encouraged by Sean's enthusiasm and the support of terrific labmates, she resurrected her old interest in the evolution of development and undertook a study of choanoflagellates and animal origins. She continues this work at the University of California, Berkeley, where she is a new assistant professor in the Departments of Integrative Biology and of Molecular and Cell Biology and is a member of the Center for Integrative Genomics.