

SICB Newsletter



Volume Spring 2006

Division of Comparative Endocrinology (DCE): 2006 Spring Newsletter

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Message from the Chair

Bob Denver (rdenver@umich.edu)

We had a fantastic annual meeting of the SICB in Orlando this year with over 1000 presentations society-wide. The turnout for the DCE was excellent and as usual there were more outstanding presentations than one could possibly attend. Two highlights of the meeting for DCE members were the Past Presidential Lecture presented by outgoing SICB president John Wingfield (titled: "Control of reproduction in diverse habitats: multiple pathways for environmental signals") and the fifth annual Howard Bern Lecture presented by Stacia Sower. Stacia's lecture was titled "Insight into the molecular evolution of gonadotropin and its receptor in the hormonal regulation of reproduction". We are very grateful to Elsevier and the SICB for support of the Howard Bern Lecture series.

Our oral and poster presentations covered a broad range of comparative endocrinology and highlighted some of the finest work in our field. Our outgoing DCE Program Officer Kyle Selcer made a heroic effort to put together a logical and exciting program and we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to him. The DCE cosponsored two symposia at the Orlando meeting ("Ecological Immunology" and "Ecophysiology and Conservation"). However, there were no symposia organized by DCE members. There are also no DCE symposia planned for the meeting in Phoenix next year. *I strongly encourage DCE members to propose symposia for our future meetings.* Symposia represent one of the most important activities of our Division and are essential for the continued development and vigor of our field. If you are considering proposing a symposium please contact our new program officer Michael Romero as soon as possible (*see his comments below!*). Michael is chairing a committee to actively solicit symposium proposals for the San Antonio meeting in 2008. The deadline for symposium proposal submission is **August 19, 2006** (<http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2008/index.php3>). Note that the SICB sponsors three kinds of symposia: 1) divisional or co-sponsoring society symposia, 2) society-wide symposia, and 3) mini-symposia.

In addition to putting together the program for the meeting Kyle organized the judges for the best student paper awards. In the future we will recruit a chairperson for this committee to take some of the burden off of the program officer. I want to especially thank the judges for their expert help in identifying suitable candidates for the awards. The competition was quite stiff again this year, with 22 students competing in the oral presentation category and 16 competing in the poster category. The quality of the presentations and posters was excellent, making the decision process difficult for the judges. Congratulations to all of the participants, and especially to the following award winners:

The **Aubrey Gorbman Award for Best Student Oral Presentation** was given to **Shingo Kajimura** (Univ. of Michigan) for the talk titled "Understanding hypoxia-induced gene expression in early development: In vitro and in vivo analysis of HIF-1-regulated xeraphin IGFBP-1 gene expression". Honorable mention in this category was shared by **Britt Heidinger** (Indiana Univ.) for the talk titled "Attenuation of the stress response may mediate an increase in reproductive performance with age in the common tern *Sterna hirundo*, and by **Frances Bonier** (Univ. of Washington) for the talk titled "Stress in urban songbirds: adaptation to life in the city?". The **Aubrey Gorbman Award for Best Student Poster Presentation** was shared by **Darren Lerner** (Univ. of Massachusetts) for the poster titled "Effects of 4-nonylphenol and 17-estradiol on osmoregulatory homeostasis and endocrine responses of Mozambique tilapia, *Oreochromis mossambicus*", and by **Stephanie Schubert** (Duquesne Univ.) for the poster titled "Testosterone increases behavioral, but not vomeronasal organ, responses to pheromones in the Plethodontid salamander, *Plethodon shermani*." Honorable mention was awarded to **Noah Ollikainen** (Univ. of California, San Diego) for the presentation titled "Evolution of ecdysone and thyroid hormone receptors".

At the annual DCE business meeting we voted to accept each of the proposed changes to the DCE bylaws that were announced last spring and posted on the SICB bulletin board for comment. A link to the revised bylaws is provided below (see Message from the Secretary). The most significant change is to set the terms for the DCE officers to begin at the end of the second Executive Committee meeting at the Annual Meeting in the year the term is to begin. Each term will then end at the adjournment of the second Executive Committee meeting at the Annual Meeting in the year the term is set to expire. Now, officers that plan the annual meeting events will remain in office until the end of the meeting. I want to thank Sunny Boyd for putting together the changes to the bylaws.

IMPORTANT!

PROPOSED CHANGE TO DCE BYLAWS: There is another proposed change to the DCE bylaws that I mentioned at the DCE business meeting in Orlando but we did not yet request a vote for. This change will allow for the DCE to support regional meetings or international conferences, with which DCE is an official affiliate, by having an annual assessment of \$4/member, for all members of the division including students. Members of the DCE have automatic membership in the International Federation of Comparative Endocrine Societies (IFCES) for which we pay dues of \$2/member/year. The IFCES holds a meeting every four years, the next one scheduled to be in Hong Kong in 2009. The DCE also provides financial support for regional and international meetings. The SICB Finance Committee will no longer endorse divisional requests for funds for affiliate society dues or support for regional or international meetings from the general funds. The cost of such obligations must be born by the members of the division. This assessment will be treated separately from the annual dues such that it can accumulate across budget years allowing for periodic international conferences to be funded by this mechanism. In my informal discussions with DCE members none felt that \$4/member would be a burden either to full or student members. In the next few weeks you will receive an email notice of the ballot from our secretary Kevin Kelley. *Please vote on this change.*

This year, the Division will select a new Divisional Program Officer. We have two excellent candidates for this position, Steve Schoech and Russell Borski. Their biographical sketches are at the end of this newsletter. The election will take place online in late Spring 2006. I want to thank Mark Sheridan for chairing the Nomination Committee and Erica Crespi and John Hatle for serving on it.

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Finally, I want to make a plea to all DCE members to respond to requests by NSF program officers to review grant proposals. Several program officers at NSF have voiced their concerns that their requests to review grant proposals either go unanswered or are declined. This makes their job especially difficult and is extremely damaging to the field. The next time that you receive a request from NSF to review a proposal please take a moment to consider the consequences of declining or failing to respond. Failure to participate in this essential function sends a negative message to those at NSF who make decisions about funding for our research. It is our responsibility to maintain the health and vigor of our field by doing our part to accept to review grant proposals and serve on NSF panels when asked.

Message from the Program Officer

L. Michael Romero (Michael.romero@tufts.edu)

I hope everyone agrees that the 2006 meeting in Orlando, Florida was a great success. The Comparative Endocrinology sessions were well attended. Special thanks should be extended to Kyle Selcer, the outgoing DCE Program Officer, for helping to organize the DCE portion of the meeting. I have large shoes to fill. The highlights of the meeting were the two plenary talks given by members of our division. We should thank John Wingfield, who gave the Outgoing President's lecture, and Stacia Sower, who presented a terrific Howard Bern Lecture.

Symposia at the 2007 meeting in Phoenix, Arizona

Information on the symposia planned for the 2007 meeting in Phoenix is now posted on the home page of the SICB web site. Although DCE is not the primary sponsor for any of the symposia, several should be of interest, including "Recent developments in neurobiology" and "Ecology and evolution of disease dynamics."

!!Call for Symposia, 2008 meeting in San Antonio, Texas!!

Information on submitting symposia for the 2008 meeting in San Antonio is now linked to the SICB web site [<http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2008/index.php3>]. Please think about developing exciting and engaging symposia in your field. DCE–organized symposia have been few and far between lately. Symposia are a major draw for our annual meeting and can be extremely rewarding for the organizers as well. Symposium papers are often published together in an issue of *Integrative and Comparative Biology*. Deadline for submissions is August 18, 2006. If you have an idea for a symposium, please do not hesitate to contact me (michael.romero@tufts.edu).

Message from the Secretary

Kevin M. Kelley (kmkelley@csulb.edu)

Since there is no lack of information in this issue of the DCE Newsletter, I will try to keep my comments as brief as possible (not easy for any self–respecting academic type!).

From the DCE Business Meeting in Orlando: The main topics brought forth at this year's business meeting related to the proposed changes to the *DCE By–Laws* and several DCE–relevant announcements. Denver and Kelley made some summary comments above about these "common–sense" changes, which were written and proposed by Dr. Sunny Boyd in January 2005, who was the Society–wide Secretary at the time (kudos and thanks to her for doing this for our Division!). They were posted for most of 2005 [<http://www.sicb.org/divisions/DCE/DCEBylawsPostedVersion.pdf>] and, at the business meeting, were approved by unanimous vote.

In addition to the approved–by–law changes, there is another proposal that needs your attention. **Please read "PROPOSED CHANGE TO DCE BYLAWS" under the Chair's comments above.** This proposes a small annual assessment of \$4 from the DCE membership, to allow our divisional support of regional meetings or international conferences for which we are official affiliates (e.g., IFCEs). This needs to be done because the Society's Finance Committee will no longer endorse divisional requests for such funds to be taken from the general funds. Each of you will receive an email ballot this spring on the proposal, and we ask for your vote. Please vote!

We also announced the elections of our newest DCE Officers. They are Chair–elect Stacia A. Sower and Secretary–elect Catherine R. Propper. We congratulated and welcomed them, and also thanked all the candidates who graciously "stepped up to the plate" for DCE.

Upcoming DCE Election:

From our DCE 2006 Nomination Committee, chaired by Mark Sheridan, we have two excellent DCE Program Officer candidates, Russell Borski and Steve Schoech. **Their biographical candidate statements are included at the end of this Newsletter.** Please look them over, make your decision, and vote in the upcoming electronic election! The electronic ballots will go out by email in early Summer, after a few months of publication of this Newsletter containing their statements.

Get your program on the web: Remember, you have the opportunity to include your professional and research information in the **DCE Researchers Database** on the SICB Website. This is a fantastic opportunity to provide some visibility for your research program. Send a paragraph describing your program (include a link to your university website) and include any digital files that can be used on the website, from JPEGs, to mp3, to video (qt, mpg, wmv). See the excellent sites already done by the DEE: <http://sicb.org/divisions/DEE/researchers.php3>. Send your files to Ruedi Birenheide, SICB Webmaster (webmaster@sicb.org), and make sure to enclose a short title and concise summary of your research. If you have any further questions, contact Kevin Kelley (kmkelley@csulb.edu).

One Additional Comment from the Secretary: Though redundant with comments from the Chair and Program Officer, I would like to reiterate the importance of some of us planning 2008 (and later) DCE–sponsored symposia. They can be a wonderful experience, and they bring positive light to our Division. "Forefront" or "timely" topics are great, as are "themes" important to comparative endocrinology. The DCE is the North American home for the field of comparative endocrinology—we need to bring our field to the greater scientific and public audiences. See <http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2008/index.php3> and the end of this Newsletter!

Message from the DCE Representative to the Student/Postdoctoral Affairs Committee

Darren Lerner (dlerner@forwild.umass.edu)

The SICB Annual Meeting in Orlando was a success for our committee (SPDAC) in many respects. Many thanks to Stephanie Cross for heading up the Student Support Program, and to Shea Tuberty for organizing the 1st Timers Orientation and two excellent and well attended SPDAC workshops: "Optimizing Your Graduate School Experience" and "Strategies for Landing a Postdoc/Job". Of course, many thanks to the students and faculty who served on those panels!

This year, 20% of the Grants in Aid of Research (GIAR) went to DCE students. Congratulations to Mukta Chakraborty, Darren T. Lerner, Sunny K. Scobell, Douglas Wacker, and Devin Zysling!! If you haven't received an award previously, don't forget to apply in November!

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On to Pheonix 2007. Don't miss the 1st Timers Orientation after the Welcome Social on the first night. This gathering is NOT just for 1st timers. The venue in 2007 will include information on how to get the best out of your time at the meeting, as well as provide information on student work for the **Student Support Program**. Don't forget to sign up when you submit your abstract; students presenting a poster or oral presentation are eligible for discounted housing or free registration for no more than 4 hours of work.

Many students were dismayed at the loss of the traditional student/post doc luncheon on the first full day of the meeting, but pending funding, we are planning a **student/postdoc/mentor lunch** for Pheonix. Join us for lunch and meet the president of SICB, our SPDAC Faculty Chair, Shea R. Tuberty, and all of the SPDAC student/post–doc representatives. This is a great opportunity to give face to face input if you have questions, comments or suggestions for the SPDAC or the society in general. Look for a "check box" and sign up when you register for the meeting. For the last evening of the meeting, before the dessert social, we are planning a great workshop tentatively entitled: "**What editors want: Paving the way to publication**". A panel of editors–in–chief and associate editors will discuss and field questions on various topics ranging from how to choose the appropriate journal and how to write a cover letter to review mechanics and publication ethics. Don't miss out! Graduate students and post–docs are encouraged to attend.

Finally, if you have any comments or suggestions regarding the meeting or any of the student/post–doc activities please feel free to contact me: dlerner@forwild.umass.edu I look forward to seeing you in Pheonix!

DCE Elections

Candidates for Program Officer–elect

Russell J. Borski

Current Position:

Associate Professor of Zoology, North Carolina State University (NCSU); Faculty Member of Genomics, Biotechnology, and Physiology Graduate Programs, NCSU

Education:

B.A. Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, 1986

Ph.D. Zoology, University of Hawaii, 1992

Professional Experience:

Sabbatical Research Fellow, Marine Genomics, Hollings Marine Laboratory/South Carolina Medical Center, Charleston, SC, 2005; Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, NCSU, 2001–present; Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, NCSU, 1995–01; NIH NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow, Endocrinology & Metabolism, University of Michigan, 1992–94; Edwin W. Pauley Summer Program Faculty, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, 1997, 1998, 2004; Visiting Scholar and Faculty, International Programs, University of Tokyo, Waseda University, and Japanese Institute of Basic Biology, Japan, 1997; Oak Ridge Associated Universities Junior Faculty Enhancement Award, 1995. Visiting Scientist at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, School of Medicine, 1990. Member, McGraw–Hill Majors Media and CELL Focus Group, 2005–current; Served as Panel Member for National SeaGrant Marine Biotechnology and UNC Genomics Initiatives.

SICB Activities:

Member since 1989; Twice served as judge for Best Student Paper.

Other Memberships:

American Association for the Advancement of Science, Endocrine Society, Sigma XI

Research Interests:

My laboratory utilizes molecular, cellular, and physiological approaches to define how hormones integrate information from the environment and genome to regulate hydromineral balance, growth, and more recently sex determination. Projects include defining novel, non–genomic mechanisms of actions for glucocorticoids, the functional genomics and proteomics of pituitary growth hormone and prolactin cell activity in relation to their involvement in the regulation of salt and water balance and growth, endocrinology of compensatory growth, and environmental sex determination.

Goals Statement:

DCE is central to promoting integrative and comparative endocrinology to the science community and represents one of the largest and most active divisions within SICB. My goal will be to 1) better promote and attract symposia and programs for the division that incorporate the multidisciplinary nature of biology and its technological advances, 2) provide a user–friendly web–based resource to seek financial support for symposia sponsorship, and 3) work to expand and improve member participation in the DCE.

Stephan J. Schoech

Current Position:

Associate Professor and Graduate Studies Coordinator, Department of Biology, University of Memphis

Education:

B. S. Zoology, Arizona State University, 1988

M. S. Zoology, Arizona State University, 1990

Ph.D. Zoology, University of Washington, 1995

Professional Experience:

1995–98, Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr. Ellen Ketterson, Indiana University; 1995–98, Assistant Professor – Part Time, Department of Biology, Indiana University; 1999–2000 Assistant Scientist, Department of Biology, Indiana University; 2000–2004, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, University of Memphis; 2004–Present, Associate Professor, Department of Biology,

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University of Memphis; 2003–Present, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Department of Biology, University of Memphis; Served as NSF panelist for Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (joint Ecological and Evolutionary Physiology and Animal Behavior panel) and for Behavioral Systems Cluster (EEP)

SICB Activities:

First annual meeting in Boston in 1989 to present undergraduate research findings. Attended majority of annual meetings in interim, as well as Western Regional DCE meetings as a graduate student. Served as session chair 1995, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2005, and 2006. Served as judge for Best Student Paper for DCPB in 2006.

Other Memberships:

American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Ornithologists' Union, Animal Behavior Society, Association of Field Ornithologists, British Ornithologists' Union, Cooper Ornithological Society, Sigma Xi, Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology, Tennessee Ornithological Society, Wilson Ornithological Society

Research Interests:

The focus of my lab is on how an animal interacts with its physical and social environment, and the subsequent effects on both physiological and behavioral mechanisms that ultimately effect reproduction. My research is integrative in nature and incorporates a wide range of techniques for investigations at both the proximate and ultimate levels. The social behaviors, multitude of mating systems, and relative ease of observation makes birds an ideal study organism to address these issues. I have conducted research on the cooperatively breeding Florida Scrub–Jay since 1989 investigating the mechanisms that underlie behaviors unique to this social system, as well as exploring the endocrine mechanisms by which environmental information is transduced to time reproduction.

Goals Statement:

My first goal is to continue in the mold set by the previous holders of this office by organizing excellent meeting programs and to serve a society that has served me well over the years. Of the several societies of which I am a member, SICB is by far the most student friendly. One of my goals would be to increase student participation in our annual meetings. DCE is one of the largest divisions in the society and, as such, should annually sponsor symposia. Encouragement of members to sponsor symposia and involve students and post docs in both the organization of, and participation in symposia is a way to enhance the student–friendly nature of the society and division. Additionally, symposium organizers could be encouraged to solicit potential speakers who, due to time constraints, cannot be included in the symposium to contribute talks for a complimentary contributed session.

First Call

Symposia Applications for the 2008 SICB meeting

in San Antonio, Texas

On–line application will be available January 25, 2006

Submission Deadline: August 18, 2006

Details? SICB website, your Divisional Program Officers and
SICB Program Officer Linda Walters (ljwalter@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu)