

Message from the President

Marvalee H. Wake

I am delighted to report that there has been much progress in the Society of Integrative and Comparative Biology's efforts on many fronts this year. As reported in the Spring Newsletter, we have been able to further reduce our membership dues, fulfilling the promise made in 1991–92, when our leadership recognized that we were in crisis mode in terms of our finances. We hope that our diligent effort will now aid us in recruiting more members to our society—WE KEEP OUR PROMISES, and enlarge and keep our program at the forefront of biology at the same time. A splendid meeting is planned for Anaheim, thanks to the extensive efforts of John Pearse, our Program Officer. John continues to make every effort to make the program as "user–friendly" as possible, thinking carefully about the kinds of modifications needed to meet our many goals. Our Treasurer, Ron Dimock, is developing new means of helping us to maintain our fiscal responsibility, and to make our funds work optimally for the society. Our journal, the American Zoologist (shortly to change its name to Journal of Integrative and Comparative Biology, following your instructions, and its format) is making great progress in reducing the backlog and regaining position to do more reviews, opinion papers, etc., under the leadership of our Editor, John Edwards, and his Editorial Consortium at the University of Washington. We owe much of this success to the diligent efforts of society officers and committees, and especially to the sound and cooperative management by our new management office, Burk and Associates, especially our Executive Director, Brett Burk.

Our several committees are actively involved in the activities of the Society; many have major roles in our upcoming annual meeting. A new ad hoc committee that is dealing with increasing participation in SICB by members of under–represented groups has been established with Beth Brainerd as Chair. We will shortly be reconstituting the membership of several of our committees by adding new members as terms of commitment end for people who have served long and well. On behalf of the Society, I thank them for their service now, and I will again at our meeting, and subsequently. The involvement of the members of the Society in all of its activities is essential to the success of SICB. I would appreciate your letting me know (mhwake@socrates.berkeley.edu) if you are interested and willing to serve on SICB committees. WE NEED YOU, and welcome people new to the Society, including postdocs and graduate students, as well as our long–established members, to participate in our work.

We have several "activities" at this year's meeting that are of particular topical interest, given recent events of many kinds. There will be an Evolution Town Meeting, following up on last year's successful one, with great speakers, followed by discussion. Please see the meeting information on the SICB Website for more information. We are also "regenerating" the Chairs' and Deans' Meeting—such an event has been part of our annual meeting sporadically in the past. Chairs of departments of zoology and biology (and related science or sub–sets of biology) and Deans of biological science or of entire collegiate units meet to discuss common issues and concerns, and ways to deal with them. The meeting also serves as a forum for exchanging information about upcoming searches, new funding possibilities, and potential collaborations. I hope that all of you who are chairs and deans will join us; please see the upcoming meeting information for time and place.

Another special part of our meeting this year will be the presence of several Presidents of societies of zoology and biology, and those with interests in organismal, integrative, and comparative biology, from nations around the world. This idea first was generated because of observations that many such societies share common goals and concerns, but there is little communication about them. Gathering at our meeting to participate in the science, and to meet to discuss our mutual interests both among the Presidents, but also informally with interested SICB members, could potentially engender new collaborations as well as better informing all of us. At this date, the Presidents of zoological societies of Japan, The Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, and Israel have indicated that they will join us; only China has responded that they cannot

participate. Presidents from 30 nations, and of several US and international societies were invited, so I hope that more will be able to join us. The recent tragic events of September 11th provide even more impetus to scientists to reach out and communicate, in my opinion, so I hope that we can serve several purposes with our efforts.

Finally, I note that one of our two society-wide symposia will be co-sponsored by the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS). IUBS recently (1997) adopted as one of its programs an effort called "Towards an Integrative Biology" –evidence of international interest in integrative biology. It seems highly appropriate that they co-sponsor our symposium on "The Promise of Integrative Biology." We will have the opportunity to learn more about IUBS, because colleagues from France, Brazil, Finland, Japan, and the UK will be present to attend the symposium and our meeting. Unfortunately, many US scientists are not well aware of the existence of IUBS, and the work that it does. This is especially unfortunate, because many US scientists are involved in IUBS-sponsored programs, and the scientists aren't really aware of that sponsorship! Further, there is a US National Committee for IUBS, sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council, that includes among its members several SICB members. We hope to get the information out about our programs, and to involve more explicitly many more US biologists. One way that SICB members are already involved is in their participation in various international congresses. Many such congresses are Scientific Members of IUBS, and are eligible for start-up loans from IUBS, etc. For example, the International Congress of Systematic and Evolutionary Biology, the International Congress of Vertebrate Morphology, and the International Congress of Comparative Physiology are all IUBS Scientific Members, and have strong support from our SICB Divisions of Evolution and Systematics and Evolution and Ecology, Vertebrate Morphology, and Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry, respectively. In a [post-script](#) to this message, I add a little more information about IUBS.

We are going to have a full, but very exciting meeting! I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Anaheim during the first week of January. I hope that you will be involved in our on-going committee-maintained activities as well. I'll be in touch

Cordially,

Marvalee Wake
President, SICB

THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (IUBS)

The IUBS is a non-governmental, non-profit network of national Academies of Science and Biological Societies founded in 1919 to:

- Promote the study of biological sciences.
- Initiate, facilitate and coordinate research and international scientific cooperation.
- Promote international conferences and assist the publication of their reports.
- Ensure dissemination and discussion of results of cooperative international research.

The IUBS is funded mainly by dues from national Members. At present it consists of :

- 43 Ordinary (national) Members (represented by Academies of Science).
- 84 Scientific Members (associations, societies, congresses, and commissions).
- An Executive Committee, including a President, two Vice Presidents, a Past President, a

- Secretary General, and a Treasurer (from 20 countries) elected to triennial terms.
- A permanent Secretariat in Paris, with an Executive Director and a staff assistant.

Recent scientific activities of the IUBS include:

- 1975– Commission for Biological Education
- 1982–92 Decade of the Tropics
- 1985– Taxonomic Databases and Biodiversity Working Group
- 1988– International Commission on Bioindicators
- 1991– Reproductive Biology in Aquaculture
- 1991– DIVERSITAS
- 1994– Systematics Agenda 2000 International
- 1997– Towards an Integrative Biology
- 1998– Commission on Bioethics
- 1988– Bionomenclature and Taxonomy
- 2000– Human Dimensions of Biodiversity