

Message from the Program Officer

John Pearse

It is a pleasure to tell you about how nicely things are shaping up for our annual meeting in Anaheim. The usual mix of symposia, contributed oral and poster presentations, special lectures, workshops, get-togethers, and socials all will be there, as posted on the SICB website. Over 900 abstracts were submitted, arranged into sessions, and also posted on the [SICB website](#) for your perusal. We can still make minor changes in the program if necessary; just let me know (pearse@biology.ucsc.edu).

Bob Full, a long-time supporter of SICB who with his students has enriched our meetings with tales about how animals move around and why we should care, will open the meeting Wednesday evening with a talk on "Bipedal bugs, galloping ghosts, and gripping geckos: Bioinspired computer animation, robotics, and adhesives." A great way to kick things off, followed by a lively opening reception.

In addition to Bob Full's opening talk, there will be three other special lectures at the Anaheim meeting. On Thursday evening Simon Conway Morris will give a lecture in conjunction with the Metazoan Complexity and Cambrian Explosion symposia entitled "The Cambrian explosion: What's the problem?" At the same time, this year's DCPB Bartholomew Awardee, Sonke Johnsen will give the Bartholomew Lecture on "Hidden in plain sight: The ecology and physiology of organismal transparency." The following evening Howard Bern himself will initiate the DCE Bern Lecture series with a talk tentatively entitled "Emeritus engagements with endocrinology."

The Division-sponsored symposia range from "New perspectives on the origin of metazoan complexity," to "Integrative approaches to biogeography: Patterns and processes on land and in the sea," to "Dynamics and energetics of animal swimming and flying." Check the Divisional Program Officers' messages in this newsletter for their accounts of the Divisional symposia, as well as the symposium descriptions on the SICB website. In addition, there are two Society-wide symposia. One, "Symposium on comparative immunology," organized by past ASZ President Edwin Cooper, brings together recent advances in this truly integrative field that was once active in our society; perhaps the symposium will bring it back to us. The second Society-wide symposium, "The Promise of Integrative Biology," organized by President Wake and myself, will showcase some outstanding examples of integrative biology, as done both here and abroad.

This year the contributed oral and poster presentations both will be organized by topics, effectively mixing the interests of many of the divisions, and, I hope, facilitating exchange of ideas and viewpoints not seen at meetings of more specialized societies. I must once again thank those people who checked the "either" box for their presentations, allowing me to create more coherent sessions of compatible papers.

Among the special sessions planned will be workshops sponsored by the hard-working Public Affairs Committee: "Communicating ideas on evolution to the media and public" and "Web-based natural history databases," as well as another Evolution Town Meeting featuring this year Massimo Pigliucci discussing "Intelligent design theory." Many of you will also want to join again in DSEB's popular workshop "Phylogenetics for dummies."

The Graduate Student/Postdoc Committee has continued to organize events for students, the heart of our Society, with a luncheon for students on Thursday; a workshop Saturday evening that will offer, among other things, an overview of employment opportunities; and finally a society-wide

social later in the evening. In addition, NSF will hold two workshops as well as have a booth for people interested in funding opportunities, and Zoe Eppley, who was with NSF and has been a long-time supporter of SICB, will lead a workshop on grantsmanship.

If you didn't get an abstract in earlier and you now want to present something at the Anaheim meeting, IT IS NOT TOO LATE. The [abstract submittal page](#) is again open on the SICB website for posters. Get them in and we will fold them into an appropriate session.

This message will be my last as Program Officer, a responsibility I have mostly enjoyed these past 3+ years. The major accomplishment during that time has been the shift to a topical arrangement of the contributed presentations, initiated by Joan Ferraris and the Program Advisory Committee. My successor, Stacia Sower, has stepped in this year and gotten together the symposia for our meeting in Toronto in 2003. Getting a jump on the symposia so early is a great improvement over my previous years, and Stacia's work provides a model for how the Program Officer and Program Officer-elect can work together in the future. Stacia can also look forward to the pleasure I have had working with Sue Burk and the rest of the staff of Burk Associates, Inc., as well as our ever facilitating webmaster, Ruedi Birenheide. They have been simply great.

Best wishes to all of you.

John Pearse
Society Program Officer