

Division of Vertebrate Morphology (DVM): 2001 Spring Newsletter

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Message from the Past–Chair

Andy Biewener

As I am about to step on the plane to fly to Australia for an early summer and some fun research, I'd like to thank all DVM members, their guests, and other SICB colleagues who attended our gala dinner at the Field Museum in Chicago. It certainly was a superb experience, and much thanks must go to Mark Westneat for making all of the local arrangements and to Sue Burke and her colleagues at BAI for helping with the dinner's organization. From my point of view, it came off remarkably well. Who could ask for more than being able to chat with friends and dine on good food and drink while under the watchful (glaring?) eye of Tyrannosaurus Sue. All told, we had 250+ people attend the dinner. It ended up costing DVM and SICB a fair bit more than what we had originally planned, but I believe that the subsidy went to a good cause. I have very much appreciated the opportunity to serve DVM over the past two years. You are a great group of people and wonderful scientists to work with. I know that our future is a bright one, and the Field Dinner was a great way to kick off new possibilities for the future. Hopefully, we'll be able to organize similar off–site dinners at future meetings when possible. Best wishes for a productive spring and summer. See you in Anaheim next January!

Message from the Program Officer

Dave Carrier

The society's next Annual Meeting, to be held in Anaheim, promises to be exciting and busy for DVM members. We will be sponsoring or co–sponsoring 3 of the 13 symposia:

1. "Tendon–Bridging the Gap" organized by Adam Summers and Tom Koob.
2. "Biomechanics of Adhesion" organized by Kellar Autumn and Bob Full.
3. "Animal Swimming and Flying" organized Malcolm Gordon, Ian Bartol, and Jay Hove.

In addition to these three, a number of other symposia will be of interest to many members of DVM (e.g., "Cambrian Explosion", DEDB; "Metazoan complexity", DIZ, DEDB, DSEB, AMS; "Physiol.Ecol.Intertidal Orgs.", DEE, DCPB, DIZ; and "Responding to a Little Nervous System", DAB, DNB, DIZ, DCPB, DEE).

During the past year, there has been growing concern among many DVM members that recent programs have included too many symposia. The concern most often raised is that symposia tend to compete with and, thereby, compromise the contributed paper sessions. Following a suggestion made by Jacqueline Webb, we are considering two alternative changes in the structure of the program that should help. One idea is to have

the symposia run in the mornings and contributed paper sessions run in the afternoons. Under this plan, symposia would run for two or three consecutive mornings. This would place the competition for warm bodies among the symposia, rather than between the symposia and contributed paper sessions. For each symposium there could be afternoon contributed paper sessions that were directly related to the topic of the symposium. This format might also help induce some symposia speakers, who are not members of SICB, to spend more than a single day attending the meeting. The second idea is to have a day or a day and half of the meeting devoted entirely to symposia. This would also largely reduce or eliminate competition between symposia and contributed paper sessions. It might have the advantage over the first suggestion of not breaking the momentum of symposia. On the other hand, it might give the whole meeting a disjointed character. I would appreciate any comments you might have on either of these suggestions.

One last bit of news for the Anaheim meeting – Robert Full has agreed to give the opening (plenary) talk at the Anaheim meeting.

Finally, I would like to encourage you to consider organizing a symposium for the Toronto meeting in January 2003. Now is the time to consider submitting a proposal. The official call for symposia proposals for the Toronto meeting will happen soon. Please contact me directly if you are considering a symposium for Toronto (carrier@biology.utah.edu).

Message from the Secretary

Audrone Biknevičius

Minutes of the Business Meeting
Chicago, Illinois, January 4th, 2001

Andy Biewener opened the business meeting with an expression of thanks for the division's support during his tenure as chair of the Division and Vertebrate Morphology and encouragement to the newly-elected chair, Kathleen Smith. Dave Carrier then led a discussion on the issue of contributed papers and symposia and developing strategies for resolving time and interest conflicts (see Dave's report above). John Hermanson expressed a need to better balance poster presentations with contributed papers and symposia. American Zoologist editor John Edwards noted that there is a 2-year backlog for publishing symposia; he may request another venue for publishing some symposia in order to allow faster turnover. Frank Fish recalled that the editorial board formerly had a ranking and selection process for publication of symposia. There was also a discussion on the computer-based presentations at the meeting. While these presentations did tend to experience somewhat greater technical problems than standard slide presentations and they are a costly endeavour for the society, several members expressed strong interest in continuing to support this technology. Marvalee Wake and others suggested a mechanism by which presentation files are submitted on a Zip disc or CD prior to a session for incorporation into a single computer (or two if different platforms must be accommodated). Whereas some members still long for paper copies of the SICB newsletter, most DVM members applaud the web-based newsletters particularly as they are accompanied by e-mail reminders members of their availability. DVM has its own permanent web page within the SICB site that may be used to post announcements to divisional members between the regular spring and fall SICB newsletters (contact me for details).

And, finally, an independent report from Sandy Whidden on the second Midwest Regional DVM meeting that was held this past November at Augustana College (Rock Island, IL): There were 35 participants, 19 talks, and lots of good food and conversation. In addition, Lance Grande gave an opening address on

distinguishing types of morphological variation, and Bill Hammer gave a closing presentation on searching for dinosaurs in the Antarctic. Although there was unanimous agreement that we should continue to hold Midwest regional meetings, no one at the meeting was willing to commit to hosting it for next year. If you are a DVM member at an institution in the Midwest, please consider hosting the meeting next year!