

## Message from the President

*Marvilee H. Wake*

It is an honor and a privilege to be President of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology—its enormous potential for leadership in biology, and the great people in the Society, make it a joy to help its work. It is especially rewarding to be President at a time when the society is financially stable, in fact "comfortable" and able now to augment student support, and to try new and progressive programmatic items. I will remember, though, the "difficult years"—it is a special joy now to have kept the promises for our recovery made by the President and Treasurer (David Wake and Kathy Packard) who kept our ship afloat in our darkest time, and steered us into calmer waters. Another President and Treasurer, Martin Feder and Kim Smith, recently made crucial management decisions that have resulted in our new stability and progress, especially through acquisition of our new management firm, Burk and Associates. Their "learning curve" has been steep, their interest in working with us to make the Society progress has been noteworthy, and their open and pleasant attitude make working with them a treat. Our Webmaster, Ruedi Birenheide, continues to work miracles with the SICB website—he often responds to suggestions or problems within 15 minutes, and always creatively.

Our annual meeting in Anaheim in January was very successful—outstanding symposia, contributed papers, and poster presentations. John Pearse, our Program Officer, excelled as always in his attention to programmatic needs and his resolute work in trying to meet everyone's requests and still have a coherent program. His thoughtfulness and calm oversight, as well as hard work, were above and beyond the call of duty, and we all benefitted from his concern for us. He made his office, and thereby our program, very special. I, and we, simply can't thank him enough. His successor, Stacia Sower, is off and running on organization and innovative ideas, and her plans for our meetings in 2003 and 2004 are well under way. Several Division Chairs and other officers, and committee chairs and members, finished their terms, and I thank them, on behalf of the Society, for their dedicated work. Our Treasurer, Ron Dimock, continues to provide capable and innovative leadership, and he and our Executive Director, Brett Burk, are spearheading a well-researched investment program for SICB. We are all delighted that our new-found prosperity is allowing us to double our commitment to graduate student research support, and we of course continue our support for their attendance at our meeting. Our Executive Committee provides an invaluable sounding board and review body for the society, with many suggestions for improvement and for new programs coming from them. Its members are our major interface for communication for the Society and its Divisions. One new initiative for the Anaheim meeting proved very successful—invitation to the Presidents of many societies in the US and throughout the world to attend our meeting to discuss our similar goals and concerns about organismal biology resulted in officers from Japan, Canada, Mexico, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Israel being present, and those from Italy, Ecuador, and China expressing strong interest but having difficulty with the timing of our meeting and/or their own affairs. We agreed to develop a web-based network to discuss our common interests, and I will be developing this. I do hope that such meetings can be further implemented in the near future. We also re-established the Deans' and Chairs' Meeting to discuss issues of general interest—that wasn't so productive, as only three (including me) of the 21 people who had indicated their interest in attending the session actually showed up. We had a pleasant and productive conversation... Our jam-packed meeting may work against our adding such topical sub-meetings, I fear.

As you will soon see, the changes in our journal voted in last year will be produced in the first number for 2002. Our new name, *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, will be featured; there will be a new cover design, and we will have a new and larger format. Our Editor, John Edwards, the editorial consortium at the University of Washington, and the loyal staff members for the journal, Claudia deGruy and Jennifer Tousley, deserve our thanks for working these changes through. The backlog is also decreasing, and we are instituting measures to allow electronic handling of many aspects of the review process—all to put our journal in a leadership position in organismal biology.

I note that this Spring Newsletter includes the discussion of our upcoming elections, including the biographies and statements of the candidates for offices; please read this information carefully. We have made our on-line

voting mechanism both secure and accessible; we hope to have a large and enthusiastic response to our candidates, resulting in most of the Society's members casting their ballots. We also, of course, will provide hard-copy ballots----please check the website. I urge your attention to this important process, and your support for the people that you elect.

I'll close by saying that I am acutely aware, as I and the other officers are working to be sure our Society's committees are at full membership and able to work effectively, of our need for more of our members to participate in the work of the Society. We have a wonderfully loyal and hard-working group, but the future of the Society will be assured only if we continue to recruit participation in the affairs of the Society by more of our members. Yes, we encourage our newer members to participate, as well as those long-time members who can provide leadership as well. We have committees to suit just about any of your interests! Please look at our website to see the list of our committees, and in our Constitution and Bylaws to see the charges for many of them. If you are interested in serving the Society in any capacity, please let me know---[mhwake@socrates.berkeley.edu](mailto:mhwake@socrates.berkeley.edu). I'll be happy to help you be more involved in the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology!

I look forward to hearing from you, and to working with you and for you. There will be more news about SICB in various e-mail messages that you will receive during the year (please read them---we try to keep the number down, and to be sure they are significant to the Society) and in the Fall Newsletter. I look forward to seeing many of you next at our 2003 annual meeting in Toronto!