

Message from the Program Officer

Catherine Loudon

The 2004 SICB meeting in January in New Orleans was an outstanding success, with the largest number of presentations at a SICB meeting (1128) in at least 8 years. The scientific program opened with a tribute to Dr. Aubrey Gorbman, given by a Past President of SICB, Dr. Howard Bern. Following the tribute was a lecture by the plenary speaker, Dr. John McLachlan, on "Environmental signaling: A systems approach to human and ecological health." Other special lectures in New Orleans were given by the DCPB Bartholomew Awardee, Dr. Jason Podrabsky, the Howard Bern Lecturer, Dr. Yoshitaka Nagahama, and the AMS Past President Lecturer Dr. Mary Beth Thomas. These special lectures were well-attended, as were the many workshops and social events. There were numerous contributed sessions and symposia, several of which were standing-room only, even with up to 13 simultaneous competing events.

Such a successful meeting would not have been possible without the hard work of the Program Officer for that meeting, Stacia Sower, and all of the Divisional Program Officers and other members of the Program Committee (Penelope Barnes, Emily Carrington, Kathyrn Coates, Paul Cupp, Michael Dickinson, Patricia Glas, Eduardo Rosa-Molinar, Richard Satterlie, Kyle Selcer, Donald Swiderski, and Bret Tobalske). Sue Burk and the staff of Burk Associates, Inc. dealt efficiently and pleasantly with a vast number of chores, large and small. Thanks also to the President, John Wingfield, President-Elect Sally Woodin, the other members of the Executive Committee, and the members of the many, many other committees for their thoughtful and creative input into the meeting and the running of the society. There was a record number of student helpers at the 2004 meeting, demonstrating again how this society has always valued and supported its student members. We thank the students for their help. And finally, thanks to all symposium organizers and speakers, and all of you who took the time to present a talk or a poster, as this is truly the heart of the meeting.

Looking ahead to the 2005 meeting in San Diego, I am happy to report another stimulating and diverse assortment of symposia. Please see the SICB website for a list of these symposia. The complete program for the 2005 SICB meeting will be finalized in September 2004 at the annual Program Meeting. The poster sessions for the 2005 meeting will be scheduled in the afternoons without any other competing events, due to the overwhelmingly positive response from that schedule at the 2004 meeting.

Symposia are now planned over a year ahead of time, allowing the symposium organizers time to prepare their symposia and apply for funding. Therefore, it is time to look ahead to our 2006 meeting in Orlando, and many individuals are already working on symposium or workshop ideas for that meeting. You are encouraged to discuss symposium ideas with your divisional program officers and submit a symposium proposal (deadline August 20, 2004). More information about symposium proposal submission appears on the SICB website. The SICB website has a growing importance for the members of the society – not just as a place for members to go for information, but also increasingly as an interactive site for members – e.g. for submission of symposium proposals, and for voting on opening session speakers. We are greatly in debt to Ruedi Birenheide, the SICB webmaster, for his hard work maintaining the SICB website so diligently.

Several important initiatives in planning the annual SICB meeting were started by the Past Program Officer, Stacia Sower, who developed effective mechanisms to include more individuals in the planning of the annual SICB meeting (e.g. the Program Meeting in the fall with the Divisional Program Officers, and the inclusion of all members in voting on the opening speakers). I plan to continue developing these initiatives and welcome feedback from the members on how to make the meetings (and their planning) as useful and enjoyable as possible.

I look forward to seeing you all in San Diego in January 2005.

Kate Loudon
Society Program Officer