

SICB Newsletter



Volume Spring 2006

Division of Ecology & Evolution (DEE): 2006 Spring Newsletter

Message from the Chair *Fred Janzen*, Chair Elect *George Bakken*, Secretary *Anthony Steyermark* and Program Officer *Jennifer Elwood*

Greeting from the DEE officers: Orlando was a great meeting and we would like to thank everyone who helped to make it so. DEE co-sponsored three symposia and by all accounts these were very successful.

This year we had thirty students compete for the DEE best paper presentation award and twenty-one students compete for the best poster presentation award. As always the judges had a very hard time selecting the winners of the competitions. The winners are Tae Won Kim (Seoul National University, School of Biological Sciences) for his talk "The evolution of courtship structure building in fiddler crabs: Has it evolved for predation avoidance in both sexes?" and James Kreft (Swarthmore College) for his poster "Trees pumping iron: Seasonal changes in material properties of branch wood in Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) and Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)". Tae Won and James will each receive an award of \$100, a certificate, and our best wishes for continued success in their research endeavors.

We especially thank all of the DEE members who graciously volunteered their time at the meeting to serve as judges for the competitions: Ken Angielczyk, Audrey Aronowsky, Pat Baker, Larry Basch, Lisa Belden, Philip Bergmann, Anne Bronikowski, Gary Burness, Nanette Chadwick, Bob Cox, Jenny Elwood, Sandra Gilchrist, Anthony Herrel, Ryan Hill, John Hranitz, Dan Huber, Deborah Kristan, Lance McBrayer, Eric McElroy, Rachel Merz, Michele Nighiguchi, Ken Nussear, Pat O'Connor, Scott Reese, Kim Reich, Adam Reitzel, Anje Schulze, Brent Sinclair, John Steffen, Tony Steyermark, Jonathon Stillman, Mike Temkin, Justin Walguarney, Brian Walker, Bryan Wallace, Martin Wikelski, Jen Wortham, and Pete Zani.

We are looking forward to an exciting meeting in Phoenix next January, where DEE is co-sponsoring two symposia: 1) Integrative Biology of Pelagic Invertebrates

2) Ecological Dimorphisms in Vertebrates: Proximate and Ultimate Causes .

The DEE webpage is still featuring the research of its division members. Please check out the site at <http://www.sicb.org/divisions/dee.php3>. If you would like to contribute material to the site please submit text files as either Word or text documents, images as either tif, jpg, png, or gif, and movies as avi or mpeg to Tony Steyermark (acstevermark@stthomas.edu).

Division of Ecology and Evolution Business Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order (17 attendees)

The officers were introduced: Fred Janzen (Chair), Tony Steyermark (Secretary), Emily Carrington (Program Officer; Absent), George Bakken (Chair–Elect), and Jennifer Elwood (Program Officer–Elect), and Sofia Hussain (Student/PostDoc Representative)

The minutes from last year were approved

The secretary reported a large (the largest?) number of participants (51!) in the student paper/poster competitions.

The Outstanding student presentation awards from January 2005 meeting were announced:

Michael O'Donnell (Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University) "Big Breaking Waves Bashing Small Sessile Stuff"

AND

Robert Cox (Rutgers University) "Does Female Reproductive Investment Constrain Growth and Promote Male– Larger Sexual Size Dimorphism in Yarrow's Spiny Lizard, *Sceloporus jarrovi*?"

Poster: Elizabeth Neeley (Boston University) "Adaptive Response of Color Patterns in the Labroidei to Environmental Parameters: A Comparative Approach"

The Program Officer's report: The three DEE sponsored or co-sponsored symposia at Orlando were: "Ecological Immunology: Recent Advances and Applications For Conservation and Public Health"; "Integrating Function over Marine Life Cycles"; and "Ecophysiology and Conservation: The Contributions of Energetics"

The forthcoming symposia for Phoenix are: Integrative Biology of Pelagic Invertebrates ; and Ecological Dimorphisms in Vertebrates: Proximate and Ultimate Causes .

The SICB Executive Committee report:

SICB has an ongoing problem with discerning terms of office and who s chairing or serving on which SICB committees. There is a concerted effort to standardize terms throughout the Society.

Oxford University Press publishes ICB as of 1 January. SICB will soon need to consider the issue of open access, which has myriad ramifications (especially how to fund it). Authors can now submit articles to ICB on–line and papers will be electronically published accordingly as soon as they are accepted after peer review, preventing the historic slowdown in publishing symposium proceedings caused by recalcitrant authors. This is great news, and should speed up publishing times.

Individual subscriptions are up, but institutional subscriptions are down. SICB is in decent financial health at present, but this trend is problematic as the latter provides nearly 50% of SICB income. It is not clear how to increase institutional subscriptions.

Will need to modify our DEE bylaws formally to be consistent with the rest of SICB. We currently require membership in DEE in order for students to participate in our paper/poster competitions: Change **A student who applies must be a member of the Division of Ecology and Evolution, &** to **A student who applies must be a member of the Division of Ecology and Evolution SICB, &**. We discussed and agreed to make a change to this requirement at last year s business meeting, but then never formally requested a vote of the membership. We will do so this spring as required elsewhere in our bylaws:

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"Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds vote of those responding by e-mail or mail ballot provided that notice has been given to all members at least sixty (60) days in advance. "

SICB intends to create a new division called Comparative Biomechanics so that the Society can serve as a home for this growing field. Discussion concerns whether this new division will conflict with or negatively impact current divisions such as DVM. We also discussed how SICB should handle emerging fields in biology, for example Computational Biology. One thought was that it would be a way of integrating other science fields with biology, such as mathematics. We agreed that the Program Officer could help generate new symposia based on the interface between Ecology and Evolution with emerging fields.

We expressed concern over access to affordable food at this venue for students, but noted the nice job to make available free continental breakfast and relatively inexpensive sack lunches. This concern will not be an issue at Phoenix 2007, which is apparently located adjacent to an affordable food court.

And speaking of future venues, venues after Phoenix 2007 and San Antonio 2008 could include a return to Vancouver and New Orleans as well as new places like Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Joel Kingsolver highlighted the recently NSF-funded NESCent currently located in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina. NESCent funds postdocs, sabbaticals, catalysis meetings, and working groups, and will do so for at least the next 10 years. Members should take advantage of this opportunity just like ecologists have done profitably with NCEAS!

In this vein, the Society is considering drafting a brief statement in support of the recent Dover decision rendered by Judge Jones, although these discussions are in a preliminary stage.

President Woodin has reconstituted the Development Committee to seek nontraditional sources of revenue (e.g. commercial) to support SICB symposia since federal support appears to be drying up.

New Business

We need your input and participation to keep DEE vibrant and in a leadership position within the Society. To that end, Tony and Fred have discussed how DEE can enhance student participation and foster cross-disciplinary interactions to help ensure a healthy long-term future for the Society.

One way to more effectively promote the importance of SICB membership to our non-SICB ecological- and evolutionary-oriented colleagues and students is to incorporate novel activities at SICB meetings. For example, we might choose to implement an Adopt-A-Student program where a voluntarily matched pair of new student and SICB veteran exchange e-mail prior to the meeting, meet at the opening social, share a SICB- and/or DEE-supported meal together on the first day, or whatever seems best.

Alternatively (or in addition), we might consider becoming more involved in targeted recruiting and support of specific individuals for Society membership and career guidance. Should we be pro-active in extending SICB's reach to new members from underrepresented groups and to engage these individuals in integrative and comparative scientific activities? Both student-oriented activities and research/education opportunities that focus on national priorities such as these will promote life-long membership in, and commitment to, SICB. President Woodin let on that the SICB Diversity Committee has lapsed at this meeting, but will be reconstituted imminently. To that end, SICB has a pot of \$\$\$ set aside for promoting these issues that we could tap with a creative proposal. The sites of the two future meetings, Phoenix and San Antonio, may be good areas in which to recruit new members from underrepresented groups.

Please also continue to develop creative ideas for symposia to be held at future SICB meetings. DEE will support you. Here is one symposium possibility to spur your thinking: we might consider exploring the fast-growing roles of computational biology in our discipline. How much should we rely on computers? Will organismal biologists and natural historians, among others, be sidelined by this change of emphasis? Will/should we lament the loss of relatively noncomputational fields? We look forward to your ideas!

Two ideas suggested for symposia by those in attendance were "Computational Biology" and "Human – Induced Evolution in Wild Populations"

The meeting was adjourned